

NOAC 2024

CU Boulder



# POST GRADUATE STUDIES:

Your Path Forward

Kevin Hula • [kwhula@gmail.com](mailto:kwhula@gmail.com)   Daryl Thomas • [darylthomas@gmail.com](mailto:darylthomas@gmail.com)

# Meet Your Trainers

- Nentico Lodge
- Baltimore, Maryland
- In my day job I'm a political science professor who supervises Washington internships
- Replace picture with your headshot.

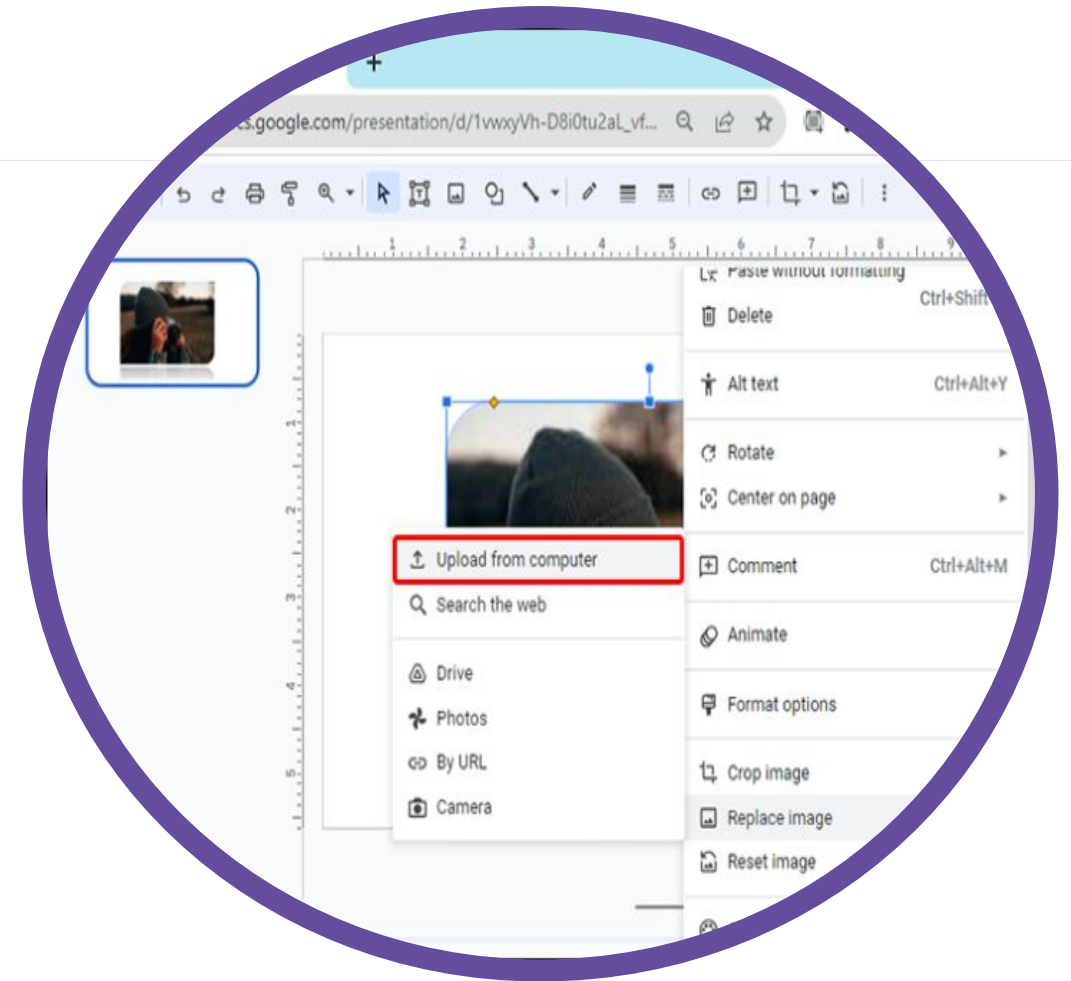


Kevin Hula



# Daryl Thomas

- Lodge Name
- Hometown
- Fun Fact
- Replace picture with your headshot. (Right click → Replace image)



Your Name



# Learning Objectives

Objective 1: Understand the landscape of post-undergraduate education.

Objective 2: Be Prepared to select appropriate educational paths and apply.



# Learning Objectives

Objective 3: Network with peers and advisers to refine your path forward.







# Crowdsource Knowledge



# Who's in the Room?

- **WHERE YOU'RE AT:**

- HOW MANY OF YOU ARE IN HIGH SCHOOL?
- HOW MANY OF YOU ARE IN COLLEGE?
- HOW MANY OF YOU ARE ALREADY IN A CAREER?

- **OF THOSE ALREADY WORKING:**

- ARE YOU THINKING OF GOING BACK TO SCHOOL?

- **FOR EVERYONE:**

- WHAT KIND OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?





# Selecting a destination





# Selecting a Destination

- Different careers require different preparation.
- Your destination shapes the path.
- Career decisions are like High Adventure treks, not a weekend hike. They require extensive preparation.



# Selecting a Destination

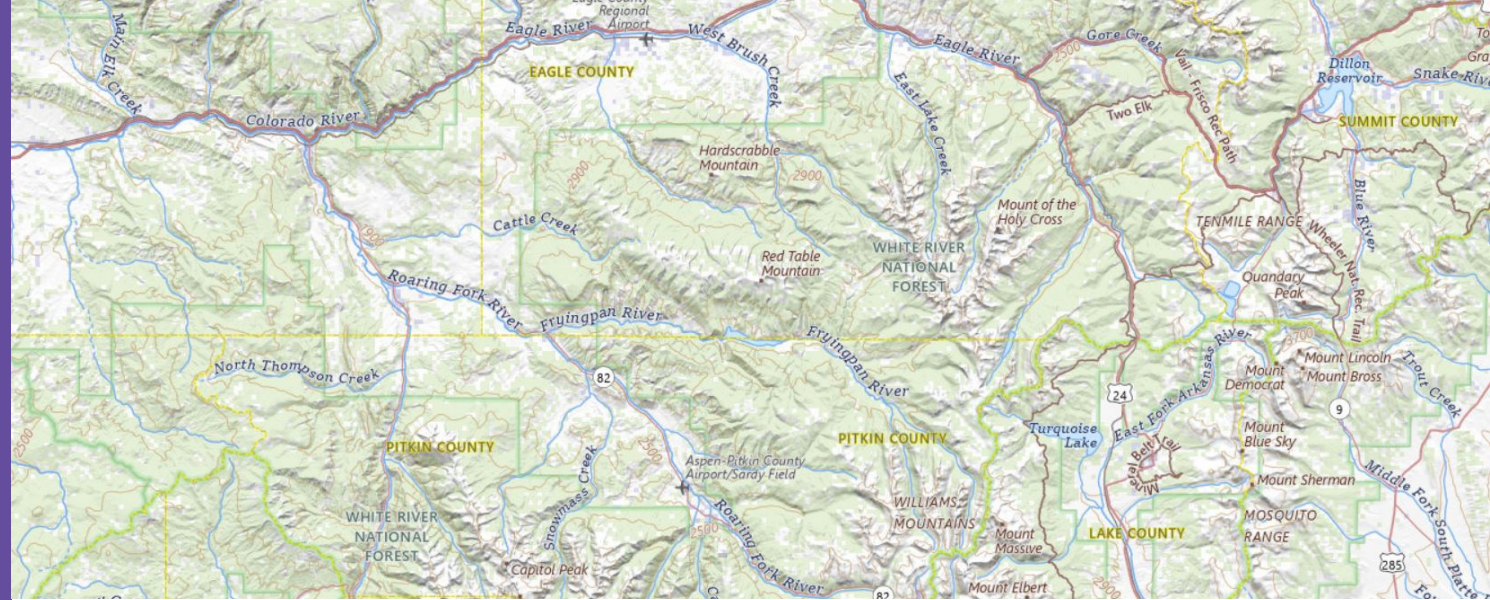
- Broadly speaking, there are two flavors of graduate education:
  - Academic disciplines (e.g. pursuing a Ph.D. route toward research and/or teaching)
  - Pre-Professional routes (e.g. Law school, medical school, Business MBA, masters degree in tech fields to deepen your understanding of a particular field)



# Weighing the Costs

- Graduate school can be extremely expensive if you don't have scholarships or fellowships
- Demand and career opportunities vary widely, so have honest conversations with professors and practitioners
- Compare the real impact of student loans to a realistic evaluation of career opportunities





# Early Preparation





# Recruiting the Crew

Grad School isn't something you prepare for alone; you need a support team

- Compare programs
- Enlist faculty to guide your training.
- Network with professionals, professors, internship supervisors and others who have hiked this trail before
- Ask the hard questions: am I fit for the trail I'm looking at? How can I prepare?



# Gear Selection and Physical Preparedness

- It starts with your major
- Admission tests are common
- The trail guides are worth it: prep programs, courses, and on-your-own books are all useful in their own way.
- Use your resources!



# Some trail guides are free

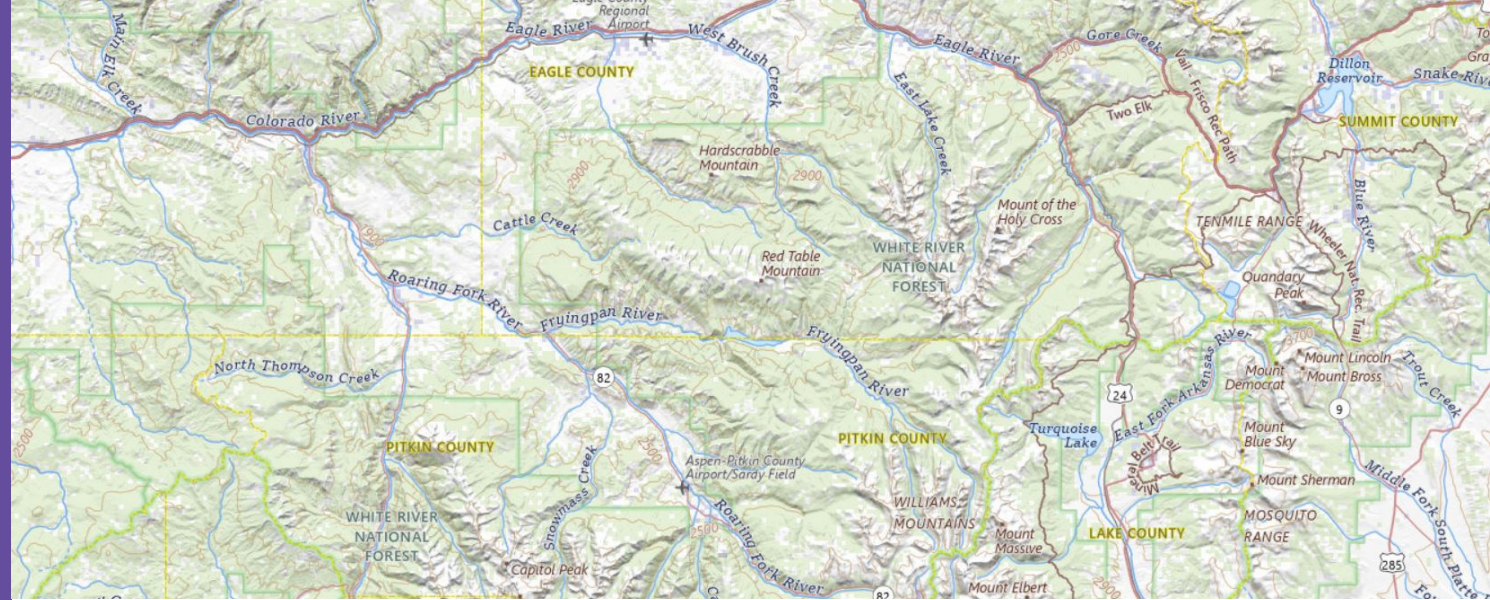
- Med School Example: MCAT examples of materials covered:

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/prepare-mcat-exam/whats-mcat-exam>

- Law School Example: Many tests involve logic puzzles, which go a step beyond the reading comprehension questions that many of you are familiar with. See for example, the sample logic questions provided by the Law School Admission Council:

<https://www.lsac.org/lSAT/taking-lsat/test-format/logical-reasoning/logical-reasoning-sample-questions>





# Competing for the Permit





# Competing for the permit

Not everyone gets to go on a high adventure because the number of slots is often limited.

- In recent years, Nepal has only issued around 400 permits to climbers who want to summit Mount Everest. People who don't win a permit are out of luck.
- Grad school admissions can be like that. It is often competitive.



# Competing for the permit

Undergraduate grades are an obvious factor, but other things matter as well:

- Letters of recommendation that speak to the admissions requirements
- Articulating a clear vision / purpose in your personal statement
- Consider funding (scholarships, fellowships, and grant opportunities): some “permits” are better than others.





# Prepare for all weather conditions



# Grad School is Challenging

The terrain is tough, so don't go it alone.

- Find hiking buddies on the trail
- Don't miss the view along the way.
  - Prioritize, but do *something* outside of school





# Be ready for stormy weather after grad school

- Some fields are saturated
- Universities are changing and tenure is losing ground
- Particularly in the humanities and social sciences, many highly educated people struggle to find full time employment doing what they trained to do.



# Takeaway Challenge

The key takeaway is that the time to start planning for graduate school education is now.

Spend three minutes jotting down your next steps, remembering that you are surrounded by resources.

