Some general thoughts and information on applying to graduate school at the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, University of Vermont.

Thank you for you interest in working with me here at the RSENR. Applying to graduate school can be a mystifying experience that differs somewhat from university to university. The following are my thoughts on how the process works and may be of interest to you.

To work with me here at UVM you need to submit an application through the UVM Graduate School. The Graduate School manages and oversees the procedural aspects of graduate study and training at UVM. The Rubenstein School for Environment and Natural Resources manages the intellectual aspects of graduate study and training.

The graduate program at UVM selective and although I have a large say in the students I wish to accept, you must first meet the general requirements for admission to both the Graduate School at UVM and the Graduate Program in RSENR.

You can find information about Graduate admissions to UVM at

   http://www.uvm.edu/~gradcoll/

See 'Information for Prospective Students' for details about how to apply and for the appropriate forms. Applications may be submitted at any time. However, most decisions regarding applications occur early in the calendar year (February) for admission the following September (or in many cases, June). We can also accept students late in the year, for January admission, when there is a particular project opening.

You can find information about RSENR at:

   http://www.uvm.edu/envnr

Note that our MSc and PhD graduate programs in the RSENR are consolidated under an "umbrella" program in Natural Resources. Under the Natural Resources umbrella there are several 'Concentrations' that allow you to specialize in particular areas and record that specialization in your transcript and resume. Most of my students associate with the Aquatic Ecology and Watershed Sciences concentration, though you can elect other options as well including no option at all; i.e. just a degree in Natural Resources.

When you make an application to UVM you will be required to submit an essay. In that essay, describe why you would like to work with me and, if we have discussed any particular projects, include these details in your essay.

If you are accepted in the graduate program at UVM, RSENR and I will do our best to provide suitable financial support for you. For your information, you should consider the following factors. As a graduate student you will need support for three basic components: yourself (to live), your education (tuition and fees), and your research (more or less, depending on the nature of the project). The personal support RSENR can offer may be in the form of a Teaching Assistantship (TA), Research Assistantship (RA) or some combination of the two. Furthermore, there are a number of permutations of Tuition Waivers associated with these assistantships, ranging from complete waivers to guaranteed in-state rates. The assistantships and the tuition waivers will assist you, but may not completely cover your personal and educational costs. Support for your actual research depends entirely on the nature of the project. If you are accepted into the graduate program under my guidance, I will work with you to ensure we get the best possible mix of support for your personal and project needs. The exact type of support we could offer you will be dependent on your qualifications and the resources available at the time of your application.

It is an unfortunate fact that the resources to support graduate research projects are unpredictable and difficult to secure. Thus, it is usually the case that there are insufficient funds to support all of the bright and desirable applicants that write to me and apply to UVM. The good news, however, is that there are lots of opportunities out there and we are all working hard to secure more resources for graduate research and study opportunities. Some of those opportunities are open to you directly. I encourage you to look, for example, at:

http://www.orau.gov/orise/edu/grad/gssponsor.htm

which lists several opportunities for funding which you can pursue on your own and then bring to UVM, if you wish. Another great funding opportunity is the NSF Graduate Research Funding Program described here:

http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=6201&org=NSF

Click on the "solicitation" link for the most up-to-date description of this program. Note that abstracts of successful proposals are available on this page as well.

For your information, while RSENR does allow MS students to enter the program without support of any kind, I'm personally reluctant to accept students on this basis except in very well defined conditions. At the moment, we do not accept PhD students without support.

Again, thanks for your interest in working with me and in UVM and RSENR as a place to learn and work. If you have further questions about the Graduate Program in general, please contact:

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Hope this helps.

Cheers
Breck Bowden