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To: Prospective Students
From: Prof. Mark Hinders
Re: Advice for applying to our PhD program

I am delighted that you are considering applying to our PhD program in Applied Science at the College. Here is some advice on how our process works which may be helpful to you.

First, our PhD program is highly individualized and our programs of study are tailored to meet the diverse pedagogical needs of our students. We do that because our faculty have a broad range of research interests and so students come to us with all manner of different backgrounds. Hence, fit with our program is what drives the admission decision. If you haven't done so already, you should look through the web pages of both the core and affiliated faculty members to identify those whose research is most of interest to you. Then begin an email dialog (and if you're nearby arrange to come and visit) in order to see if there is a good fit between what you want to do and what those faculty are planning over the next few years.

Second, we've just transitioned to an all electronic application folder system. You can apply either on-line or download the forms and send things in by regular mail, but anything that reaches us in hardcopy will be scanned and converted to a concatenated pdf for review. Rosi has a pretty fast scanner, so it's no trouble to send things in hardcopy but feel free to also follow up with an electronic version of things to rxfoxx@wm.edu. You can also email Rosi whatever supplementary material you like and she'll append it to your file, especially a CV. If you've co-authored papers or reports from your research, those would be appropriate to send. Multi-media files are sometimes problematic, but links to a web site of your own or a Youtube link are often good work arounds.

Third, it's the faculty of the Department that will be reading your file and that of every other applicant. We don't pre-filter by GRE or GPA or some other artificial metric. We'll note all of those things, of course, but we'll also be very interested to see what your letters of reference say about your suitability to our program and will want to see in your personal statement why it is that you want to come here and specialize in one of our areas of expertise.

With regard to timing, we start reviewing Fall semester applications in mid-February so you'll want to make sure that your application is complete by then. Don't panic if it takes a few weeks for us to get back to you regarding the admission recommendations of the Department. No news is good news in February and March.

