What do Employers, Professional Schools, and Graduate Schools Want?

Ultimately employers and graduate schools are both interested in productivity. Employers and graduate schools value the same qualities, but place different priorities on them. Employers need productivity immediately, so they are most interested in skills and experience, whereas graduate schools are more interested in long-term potential.

It is important to realize that career success depends on talent and hard work, not the "name" on a college diploma. There is a popular fallacy that a diploma from a "name" school can determine career success ... this is simply not true! We live in America, and ultimately a person's career success and earning power by the age of 35 has little, if anything to do with the exclusiveness of the college which admitted them at the age of 18. Career success does have a great deal to do with individual talent and what students do and learn while they are in college. For students who take advantage of it, excellent career preparation can be gained at any accredited college or university.

Clarion graduates with a B.S. in a field of biology have the option of working immediately, going on to graduate school for an M.S. or Ph.D., or attending professional schools in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, chiropractic, and others.

PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS
These schools train professionals for careers in health, business and law. For biology majors, this usually means medical, dental or veterinary school. Other traditional areas are chiropractic, optometry, and podiatry. New fields such as physician assistant, nurse anesthetist, physical therapy, and occupational therapy are now increasingly important and offer good career opportunities. As the biotechnology industry matures, new opportunities in business administration, finance, marketing and sales, and patent law for professionals with a strong undergraduate training in science.

GRADUATE SCHOOLS
The purpose of an M.S. or Ph.D. program is further scientific training and cutting-edge scientific research. Consequently graduate schools do not expect immediate productivity, but they do require long-term potential. They use undergraduate grades, GRE scores (a standardized test somewhat similar to SATs), and the rigor of a students course-work to judge potential. However they are still very interested in research ability, so they look carefully at undergraduate research. They are impressed by internships at research institutes or Ph.D. universities, because this shows an ability to "run on a fast track." Extracurricular activities are indicators of social skills and the energy and work ethic needed to be productive in the lab.

EMPLOYERS
With their need for immediate research productivity, employers are more concerned with research skills. They want starting technicians to be able to understand what they are doing so they don't make mistakes and waste time, technical skills are needed to perform experiments, and
analytical skills are needed to understand the data and results. Employers therefore place a premium on independent undergraduate research. They also use grades, coursework and recommendations as predictors of research ability. Extracurricular activities are indicators of social skills and the energy and work ethic needed to be productive in the lab.