

Graduate Studies at UMBC CSEE: **How to Succeed**

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Computer Science and
Electrical Engineering

Adapted from presentations by Professor Marie desJardins

August 2011

What we'll cover

- Graduate lifecycles
- UMBC resources
- Success in your research
- Academic integrity
- An illustrated guide to a graduate degree

Real Graduate Students of UMBC

Lifecycle of an MS Student

- Take **courses**
 - Talk to your advisor (there for a purpose!) and ask other students as well
 - Take 2-3 courses/semester if supported
 - Can transfer up to 6 credits, but ...
- **Internship**: apply Nov-May for summer
- **Thesis** or project research
 - Thesis: 6 credits, typically over two semesters
 - Project: 3 credits in one semester (+ more courses)
 - Thesis vs. project considerations
 - Publish research paper
- Apply to **Ph.D.** program or interview and get **job**

Lifecycle of a Ph.D. student

- Take courses and **find an advisor**
- **Read lots of papers**, start thinking of a problem
- Take 699 or CMSC 601 for **early research experience**
- **Complete portfolio**
- Take more **courses** to support your research area
- Develop a **dissertation topic**, do preliminary research to establish feasibility, recruit a committee
- Write & defend **dissertation proposal** (prem. exam)
- Work more, sleep less, coffee, dine at vending machine, **write papers**, present papers, **write dissertation**
- **Defend dissertation**
- Interview and get job

Research Advisors

- You have a temporary advisor who is ... *temporary*
- S/he won't necessarily be your research advisor and is under no obligation to take you on as an advisee
- You are responsible for finding an advisor who will guide your research – whether MS or Ph.D.
- Ideally, do this early on in your second semester, but **positively by the end of your first year**
 - Renewal of support depends on it!
 - Don't leave it to the last minute!
 - Submit the change-of-advisor form *even if your temporary advisor will also be your research advisor!*

How not to find a research advisor

- **Repeat**
 - Room=Select random (CSEE_Faculty_office)
 - Occupant's research area =
 google_lookup(name(room))
 - Knock on door
 - Pretend to be interested in <Occupant's research area> and express strong desire to work with them
- **Until (Found assistantship/advisor)**
- Another bad strategy: follow the money

How to Find a Research Advisor

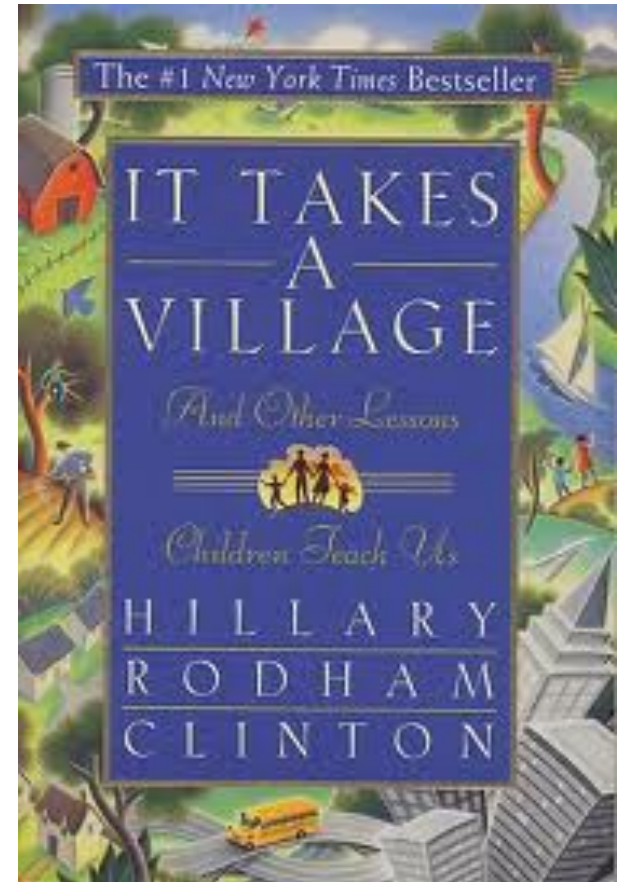
- Decide which area(s) interest you: *all areas* is not a valid answer!
- Take classes in those areas
 - Very important – even more important than taking core/comp classes, if it comes down to a choice!
- Talk to students working in those areas – what do they they do? what are their advisor's interests?, inside scoop on the group?, etc.
- Go to as many (relevant) talks as possible
- Read a lot on the topics you're interested in
- Downselect to a few faculty members, arm yourself with knowledge about their projects and how you might fit in...

How to Contact a Potential Advisor

- Knock on door or set up an appointment by e-mail
- Icebreaker questions:
 - I'm interested in areas X, Y, and Z. Can you tell me more about your research in those areas?
 - Do you have any ongoing projects that I might be able to learn more about or contribute to?
 - May I sit in on your lab meetings?
- Be persistent...
 - Stay in touch with your potential advisor(s)
- ...but not annoying
 - Remember that faculty are usually very busy and have limited time

Develop relationships with faculty

- Just as *“it takes a village to raise a child”*, it takes a department to train a grad student
- To do your research, you will probably need to become expert in several new areas
- Pragmatically, you will need a committee of three to five faculty for your MS thesis or PhD thesis



Have a *professional* presence on the Web

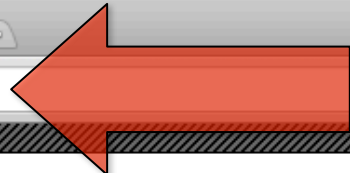
- Have a set of web pages, including your CV, and keep them current
- Put your papers and presentations online
- Consider developing a blog and posting frequently – it's good practice writing
- Make demos, programs, data & code available
- Create and maintain a unique and valuable resource (e.g., an annotated bibliography)
- Contribute to online mailing lists, newsgroups, Wikipedia, Q&A sites, etc.

Have a *Professional* presence on the Web

- Use online social networking systems like LinkedIn and Facebook
 - Many of your graduate student peers will remain in your professional network for decades
- Optimize your online presence for search engines
 - Write titles for both people and search engines
 - Ask: what terms will the people who I want to find my paper search for?
- Keep up with the technology and trends
- Develop a brand

Campus Resources and Activities

GSA

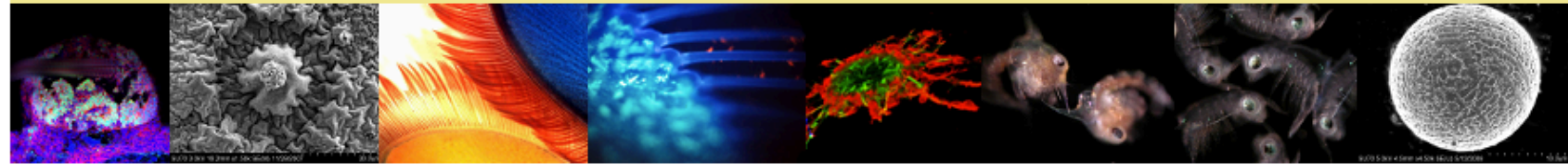


AN HONORS UNIVERSITY IN MARYLAND

SEARCH [input field] GO

- HOME
- ABOUT GSA
- TRAVEL GRANTS
- RESEARCH
- GSA SENATE
- GSO
- WRITING ADVISOR
- GSA CALENDAR
- GRC
- AWARDS

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION



- Tutorial For Loan Deferment
- Summer 2011 Office Hours
- GSA Calendar
- GSA Grants
- GSA Senate
- GSO

WELCOME

Welcome to the Graduate Student Association (GSA) at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). We are proud to represent the graduate students of UMBC and to serve as the liaison between the graduate student body and the university faculty and staff. The mission of GSA is to promote and support graduate students, to allocate the revenue received from graduate student fees to further the GSA mission and the interests of graduate students, to advocate on behalf of the graduate student body, to provide graduate student representation on University committee, and to represent the interests and concerns of all UMBC graduate students.

GSA offers several services that are aimed to promote success in graduate school, to encourage scholarship and research, and to provide networking and socializing opportunities. We staff a writing advisor who is available to help with all stages of the writing process. Each spring, GSA sponsors the Annual Graduate Research Conference (GRC) where students are able to share their research with the entire UMBC community through oral and poster presentations. During the spring, we also host Graduate Student Week (GSW), which is designed to celebrate and to express our appreciation of graduate students. Travel and research grants are two of the most popular services offered by GSA. The purpose of these grants is to help subsidize the costs students incur when presenting their research at conferences and conducting certain aspects of their research. In addition to academic services, GSA allows hosts social events, which include Grad Night at UMBC Basketball Games, and Social Hours at Flat Tuesdays.

I encourage you to explore our website, which includes information about creating and

QUICK LINKS

- Alumni
- Career Services
- Graduate School
- Dining Service
- Parking
- PROMISE Program
- Counseling Services
- University Health Services
- TAG@UMBC: Transportation Alternatives for a Greener UMBC



- [About](#)
- [FAQ](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [Donations](#)

Continuous Support for Graduate Students & Postdoctoral Scholars

PROF-IT: PROFESSORS-IN-TRAINING SUCCESS SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Orientations and Success Seminars for 2011-2012

The Graduate Schools at UMBC and College Park will hold orientations this week, and UMBC will hold its first graduate student seminar on Friday, August 26. UMBC's Evening Graduate School...

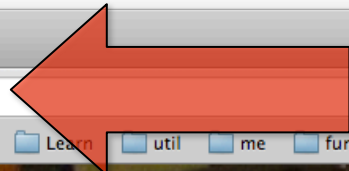
PROF-IT: PROFESSORS-IN-TRAINING
Orientations and Success Seminars for 2011-2012

SUCCESS SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS
Success Seminars

PROF-IT: PROFESSORS-IN-TRAINING
PROF-it: Professors-in-Training

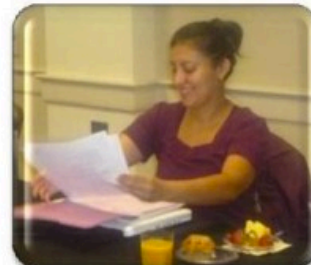
Spotlights

SEARCH THIS SITE



The Dissertation House

Helping to move you from ABD to PhD!



- Home
- About
- Alumni
- Apply
- Articles
- Blog – Online Challenge
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Events
- Resources
- Testimonials
- Videos

Welcome to the Dissertation House

Posted on [June 11, 2011](#) by [Renetta Garrison Tull](#)

The **Dissertation House** is comprised of a series of workshops, meetings, and seminars that are held on college campuses and at conferences to facilitate successful completion of the doctoral degree. The workshops emphasize writing the dissertation, preparing for the defense, and communicating with faculty. The Dissertation House is a program of the [National Science Foundation's PROMISE: Maryland's Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate \(AGEP\)](#) and is supported by the Graduate Schools at the [University of Maryland Baltimore County \(UMBC\)](#), the [University of Maryland College Park](#), and the [University of Maryland Baltimore](#). Growth of the program is also attributed to the [Council of Graduate School's](#) Ph.D. Completion Project.

Posted in [Dissertation House](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

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Dissertation House 12 Hour Marathon Session Comes to PROMISE SSI

Posted on [August 10, 2011](#) by [Renetta Garrison Tull](#)

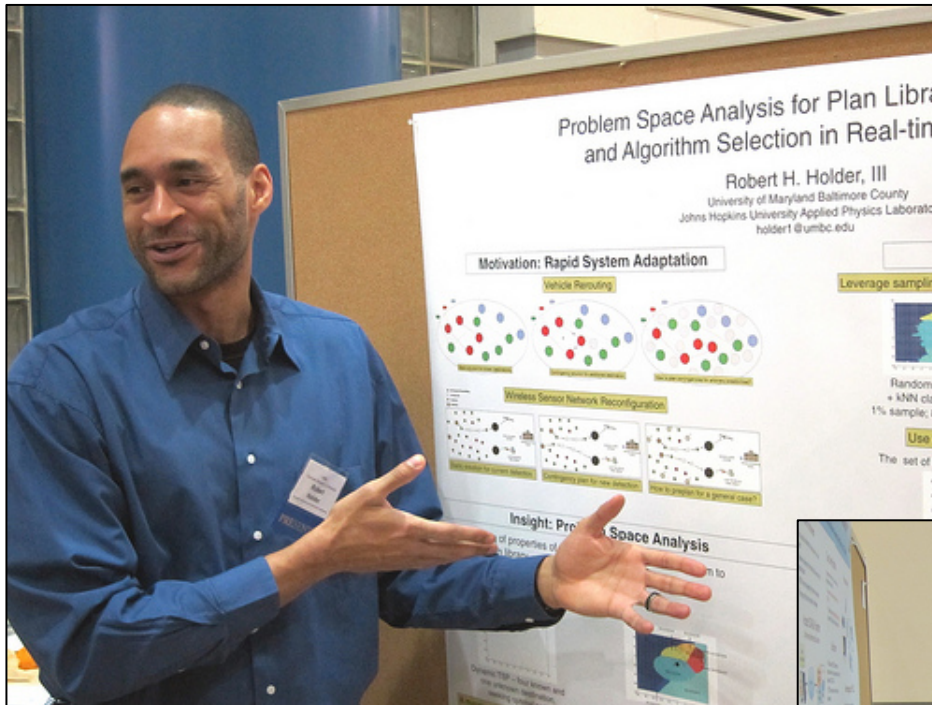
The 2011 PROMISE Summer Success Institute will sponsor a 12 Hour Marathon



Other Student Groups

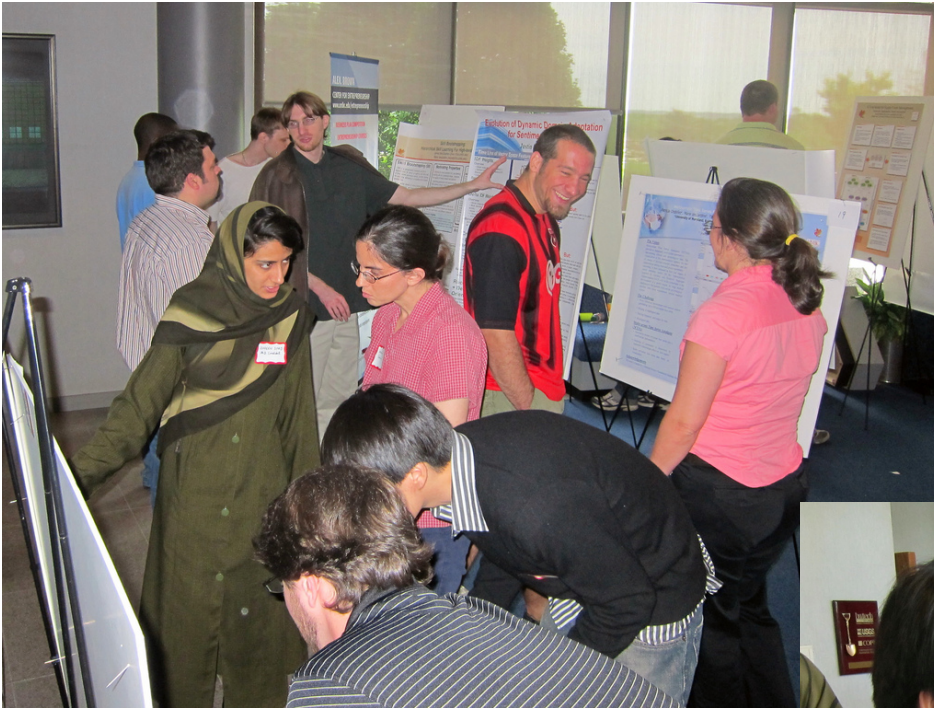
- ACM Student Chapter
 - President: Yasaman Haghpanah,
yasamanhj@umbc.edu
- IEEE Student Branch
- Linux Users Group
- National Society of Black Engineers

GSA Graduate Research Conference



- Held in April
- Research talks and posters by UMBC graduate students
- Feedback and awards for best presentations and posters

CSEE Research Review



- Held in the first week of May
- Research talks by faculty and students
- Poster session for student research
- Voting and awards for best presentations and posters

CSEE Hi Tea



- Tea, snacks and conversation
- Held every Friday's at 3:00pm in the hallway outside ITE 325
- Organized and run by CSEE graduate students

Keep in Touch

- Read email sent to your @umbc.edu address
- Monitor CSEE news
 - CSEE homepage: <http://csee.umbc.edu/>
 - RSS feed on <http://csee.umbc.edu/>
 - Facebook: like [http://facebook.com/
/pages/csee/104803409392](http://facebook.com/pages/csee/104803409392)
 - Twitter: follow [@UMBCCSEE](https://twitter.com/UMBCCSEE)
 - my.umbc.edu: join the CSEE Group

Academic Integrity

Professionalism

- Profession: “a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation” ([Merriam-Webster online](#))
- Graduate school is your transition from student to professional
- Successful professionals exhibit appropriate standards and integrity
- The following comments on academic standards are also standards of our professions

UMBC Academic Integrity Policy

“By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC’s scholarly community, in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. **Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong.** Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal.”

Statement adopted by UMBC’s Undergraduate Council and Provost’s Office

What Does It Apply To?

- **Class work:** Homework, exams, projects
- **Research:** proposals, reports, data, code
...even if not published, if it is represented as your work it must be your work
- **Publications:** in journals, conferences, workshops, symposia, self published
- If you have to ask if it applies, the answer is almost certainly **YES**
- When in doubt, ask your professor/advisor!

Academic Integrity Violations

- Cheating:
 - Copying answers from another student or any outside source
 - Obtaining exam questions illegally
- Fabrication:
 - Falsification of data or results
 - Misrepresenting your qualifications

Plagiarism Buts

Representing somebody else's words as your own is plagiarism

- *But I cited the reference in the bibliography!*

If you didn't explicitly quote the text you used and cite the source where you used the text, it is plagiarism.

- *But I only used some of the words!*

Scattering some of your own words and rephrasing isn't enough; if the ideas are not restated entirely in your own words, it is plagiarism.

Plagiarism Buts

- *But only the introduction and background material are borrowed; all of the original research is mine*

If somebody else's words appear in any document that you have represented to be written by you, it is plagiarism.

- *But it was only a draft/not an official classroom assignment, so I didn't think it counted*

If you represented somebody else's words as your own, even in an informal context, it is plagiarism.

Plagiarism Buts

- *But the professor told me to use that source!*

Unless you are explicitly told to copy a quote from a source, you must write your answers *in your own words* even if you use a specified source. If somebody else's words appear in your assignment without correct attribution (quotation marks and citation at the point of the quote), it is plagiarism.

Sometimes attribution gets overlooked through oversight, but it is your responsibility to minimize the possibility that this can happen.

Abetting


- Helping another student to cheat, falsify, or plagiarize will generally result in your receiving ***the same penalty***
- Know what your project partners are doing; if you turn a blind eye to their cheating, you may be hurting yourself

Penalties

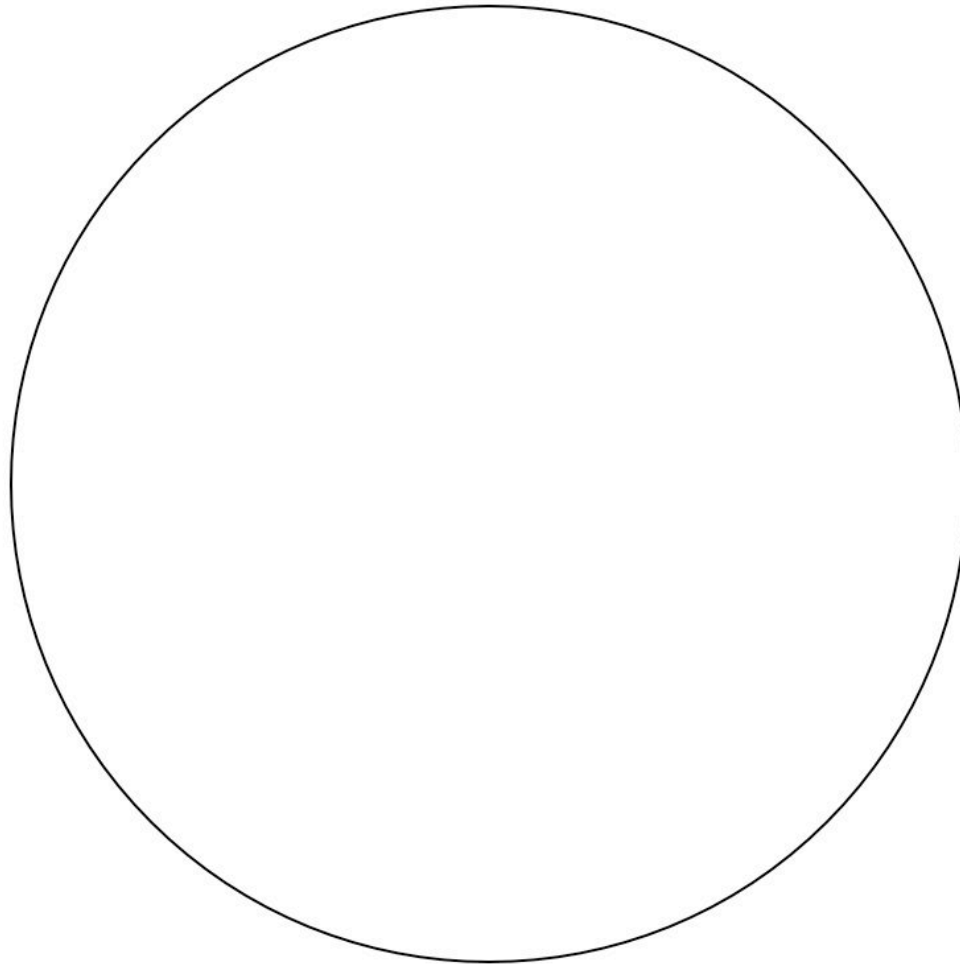
- Each professor sets his or her own policies.
- Typical penalties depend on the severity, and whether it is a first offense. They may include:
 - Receiving a zero on an assignment (even if only part of the assignment was plagiarized or copied)
 - Being required to redo the assignment, without credit, in order to pass the class
 - Receiving a full grade reduction in the class (e.g., an A becomes a B, a B becomes a C)
 - Suspension or expulsion from the university

Illustrated guide to a Ph.D.

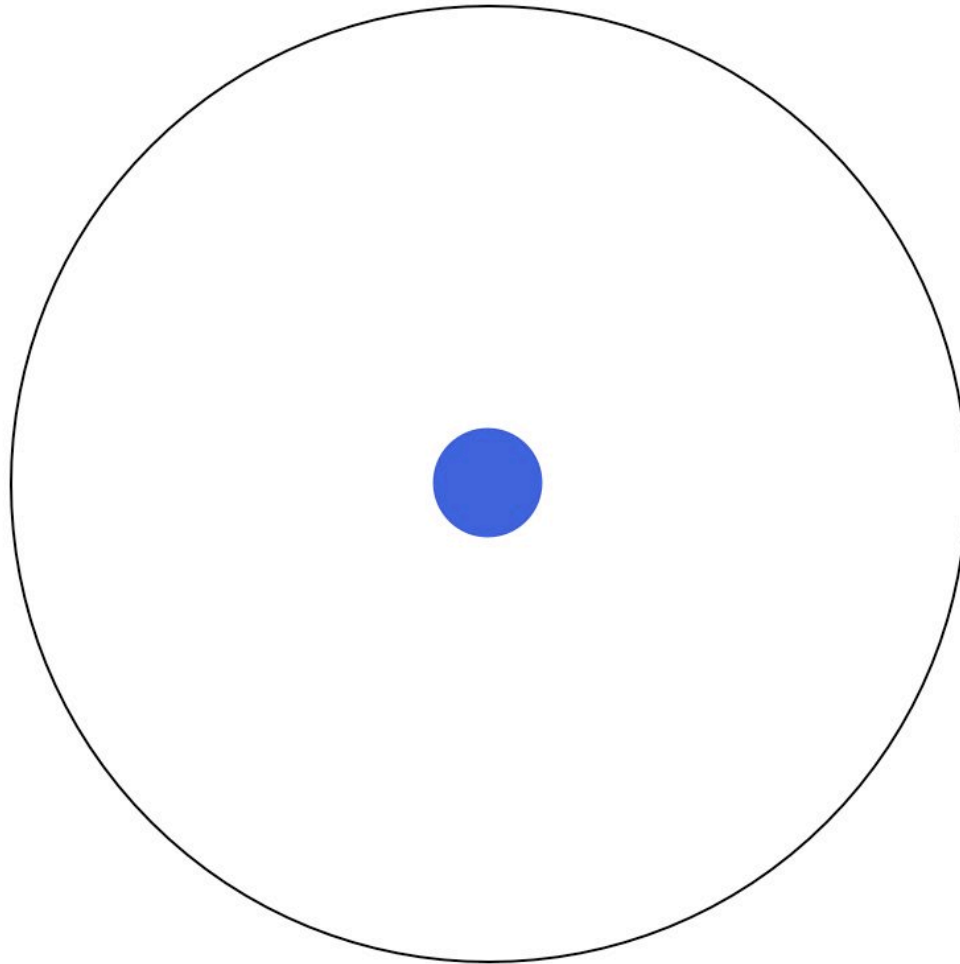
The illustrated guide to a Ph.D.

- Professor [Matt Might](#), CS, University of Utah has a good way of explaining what it means to do a Ph.D.
 - It is also applicable to doing MS research
 - and probably your life after graduation
- The presentation is licensed under the  [Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial 2.5 License](#)

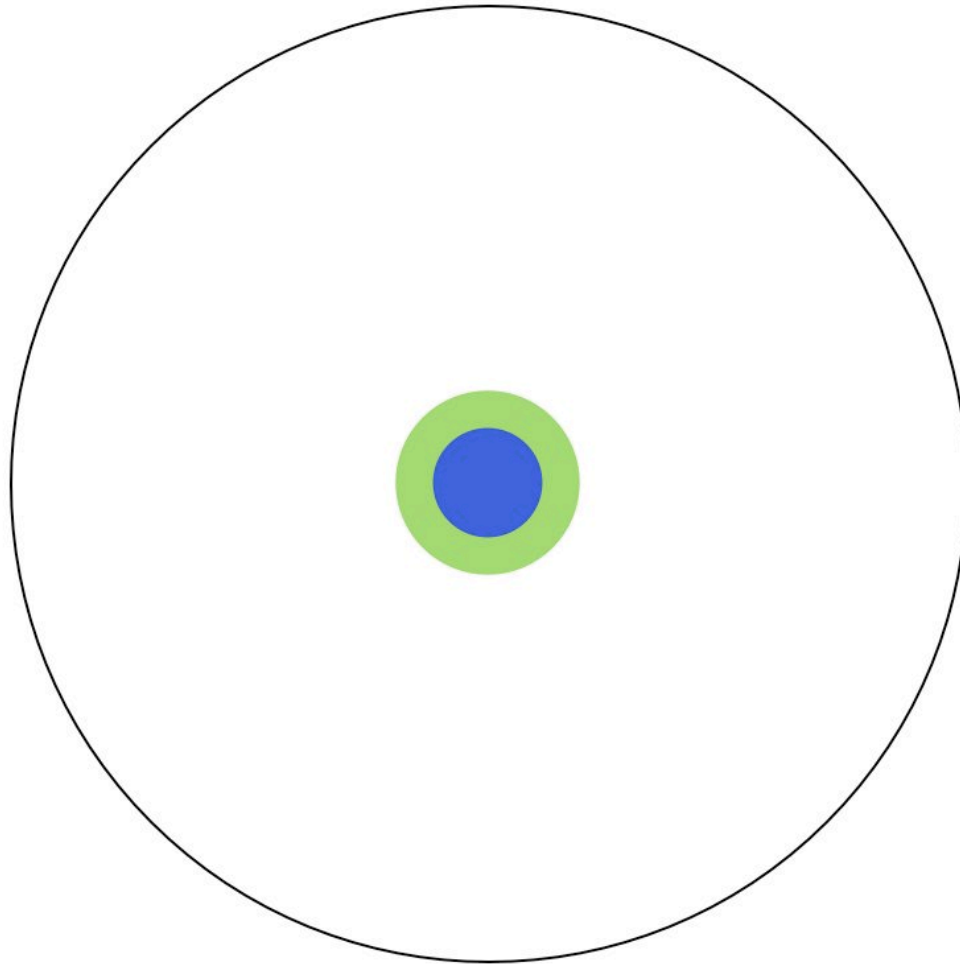
**imagine a circle that contains
all of human knowledge**



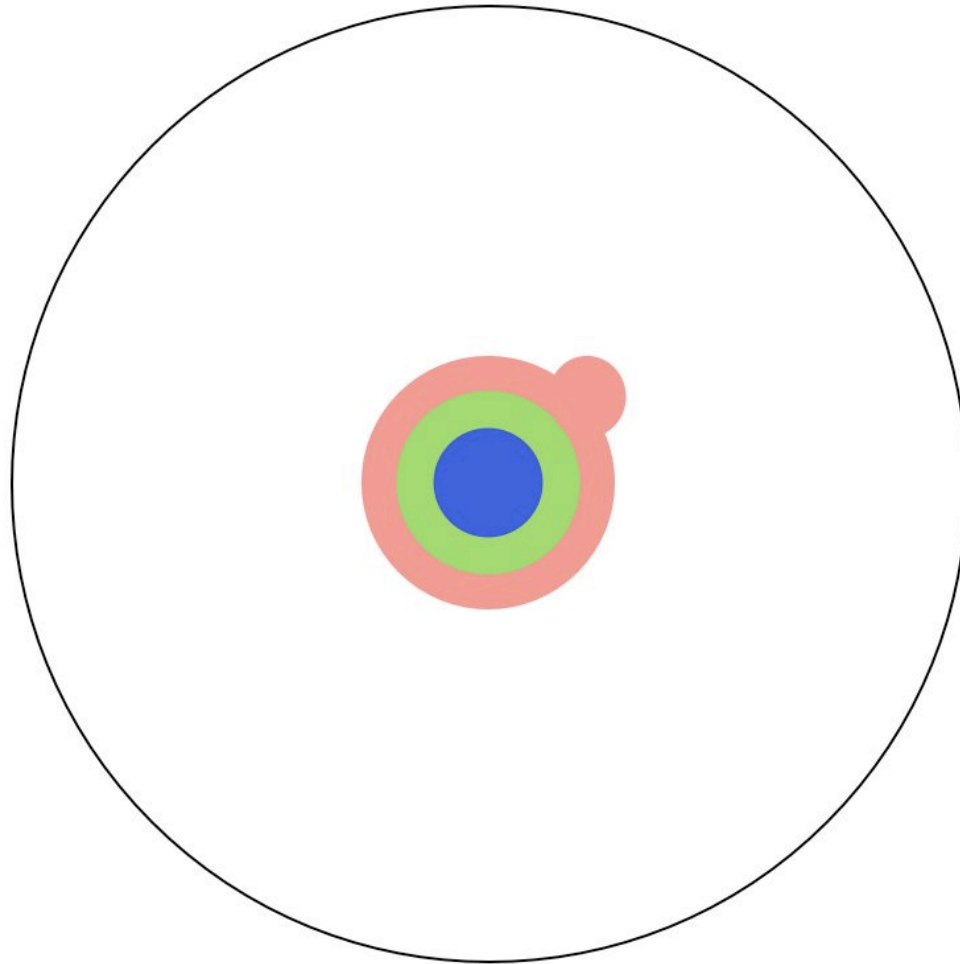
By the time you finish elementary school, you know a little



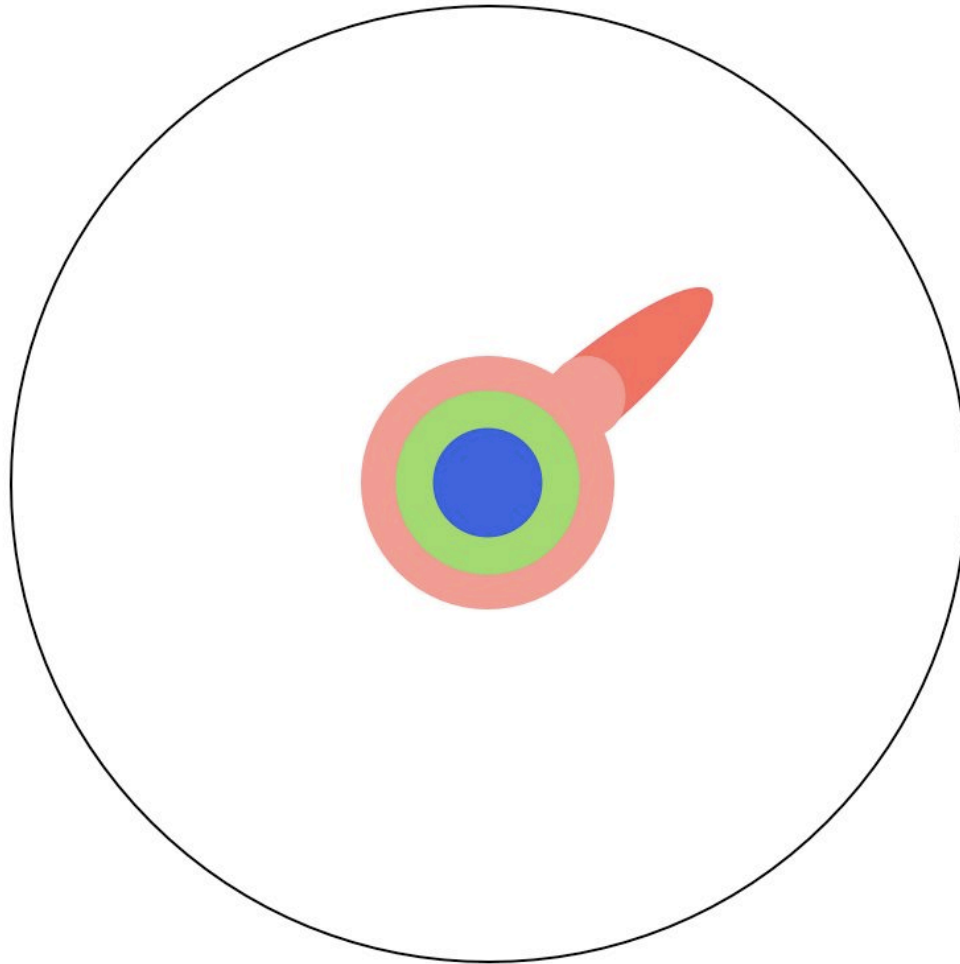
**By the time you finish high school,
you know a bit more**



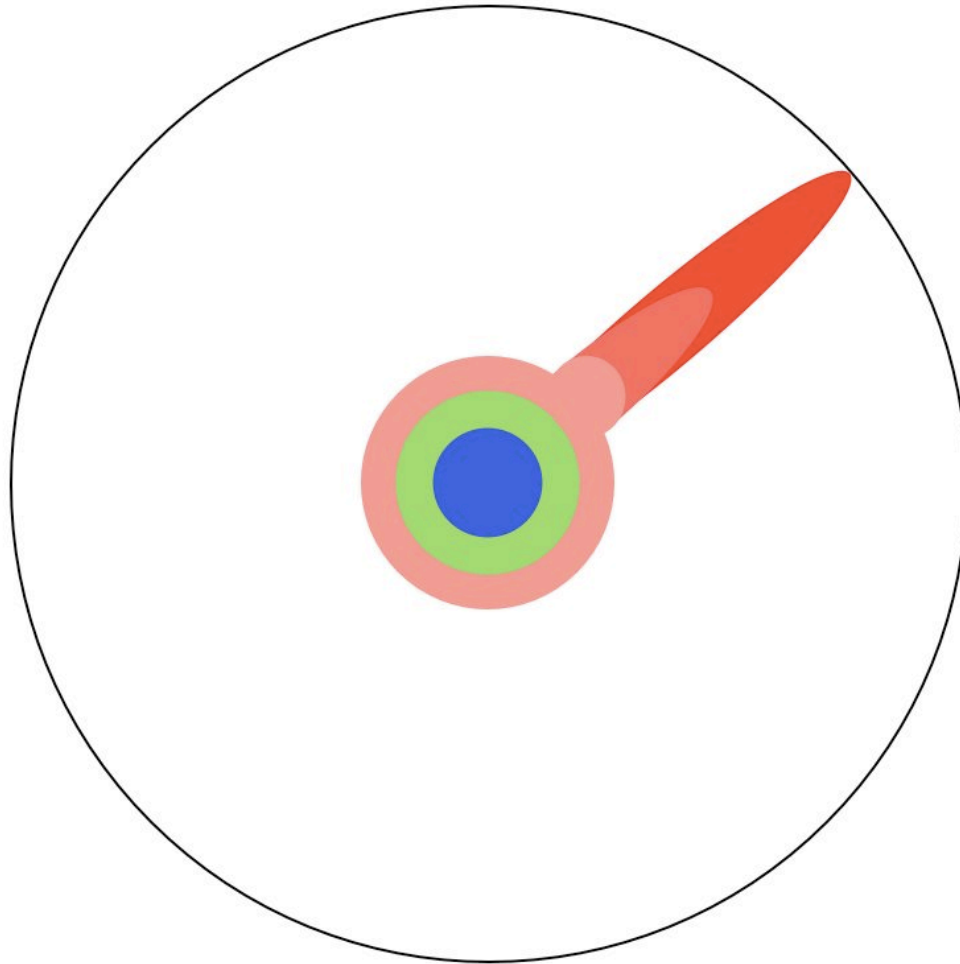
**With a bachelor's degree,
you gain a specialty**



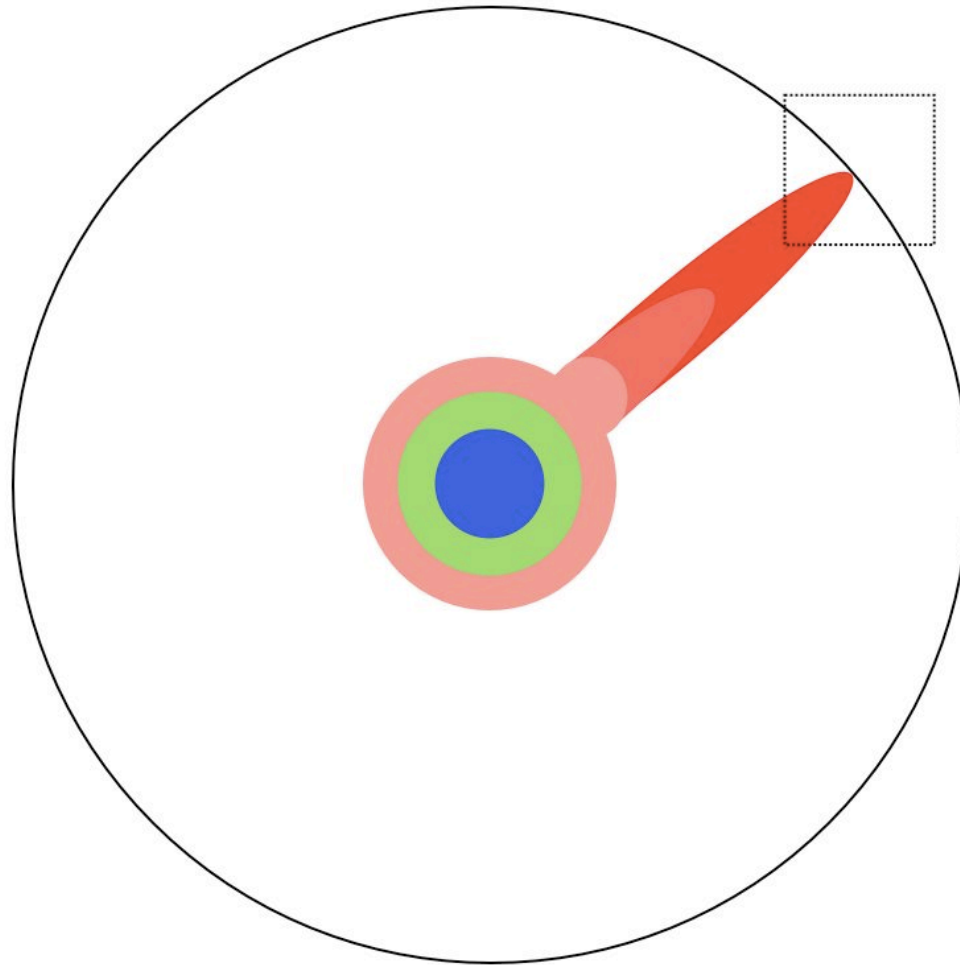
A master's degree deepens that specialty



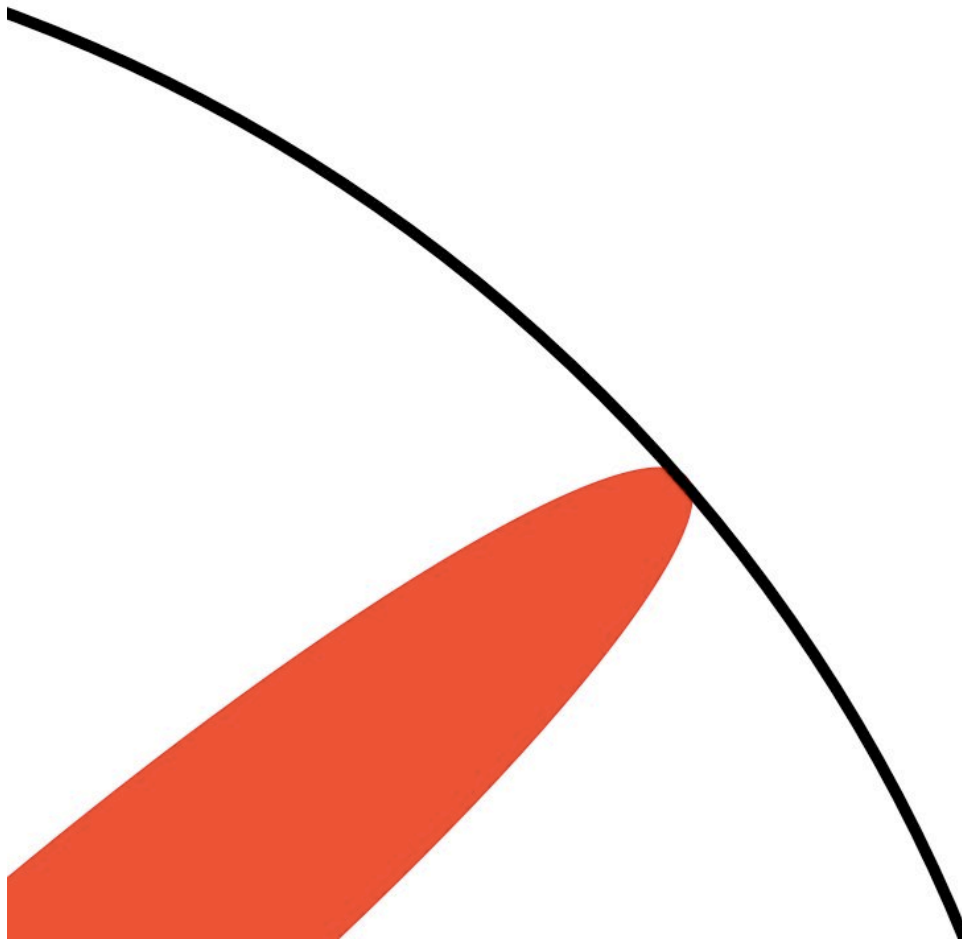
**Reading research papers takes you to the
edge of human knowledge**



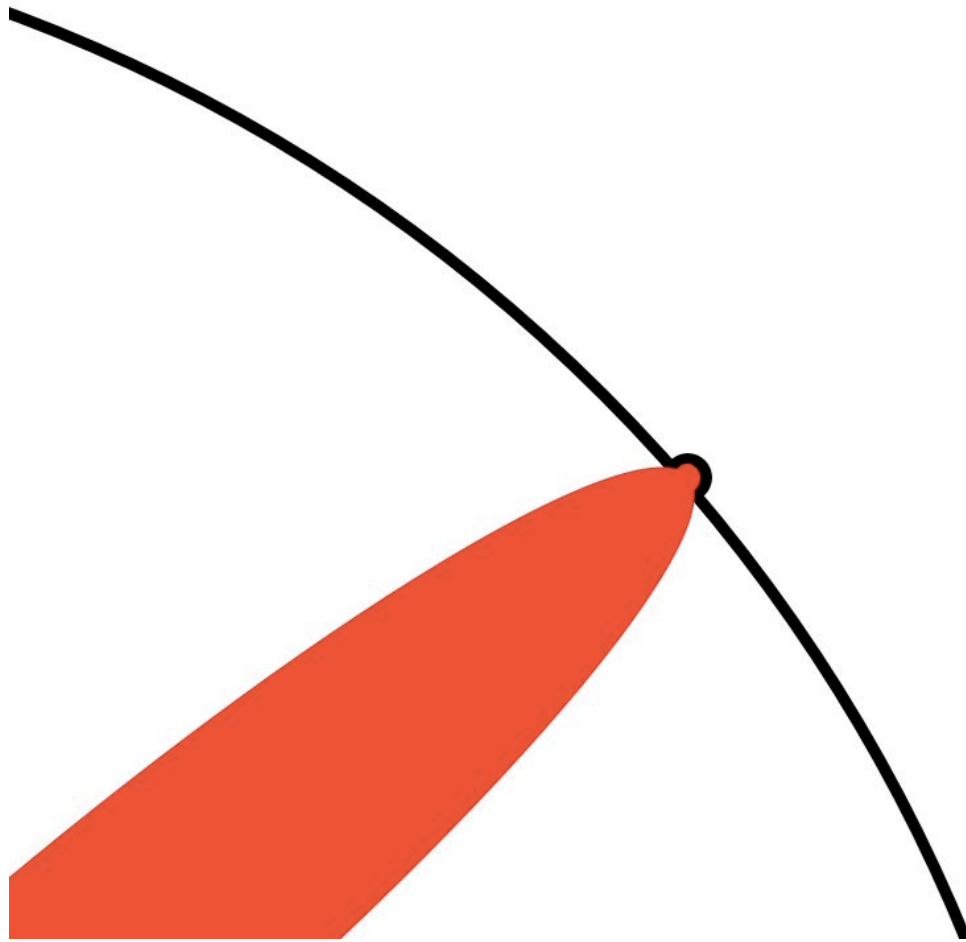
Once you're at the boundary, you focus



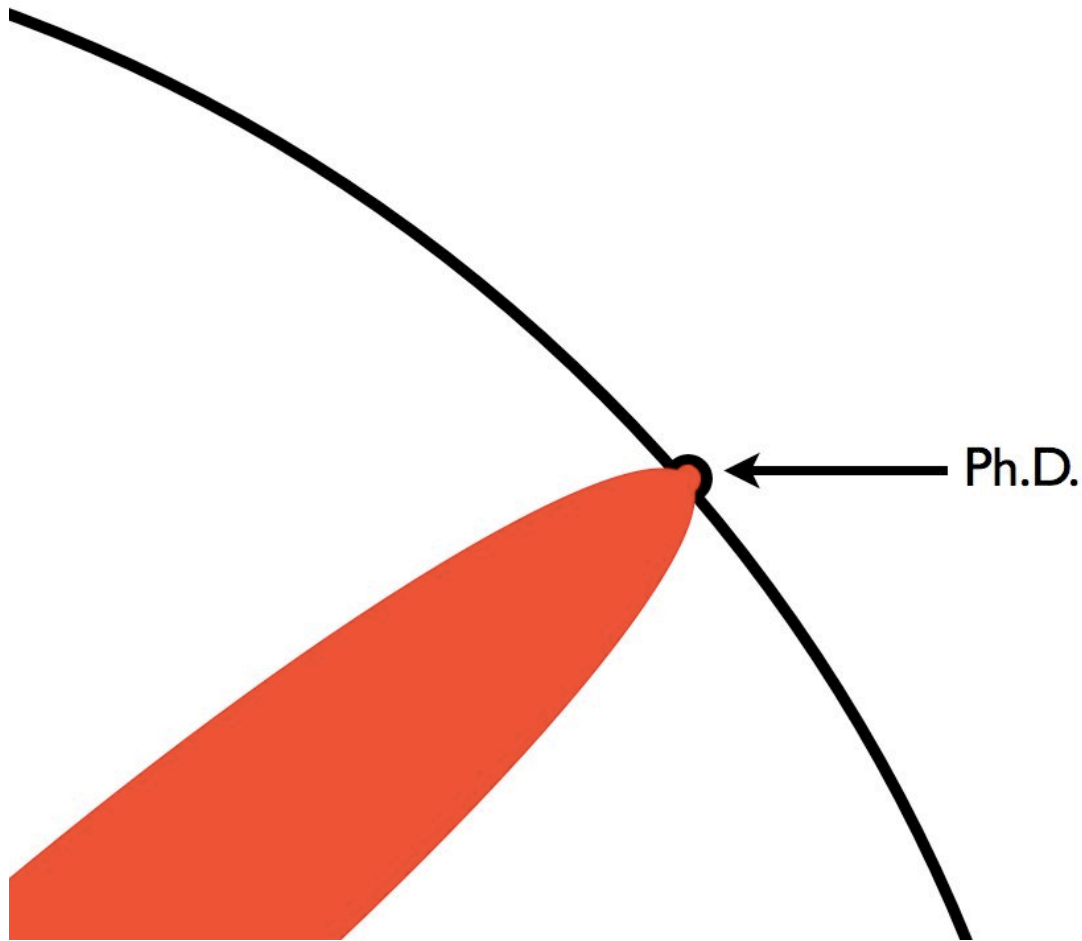
You push at the boundary for a few years



Until one day, the boundary gives way



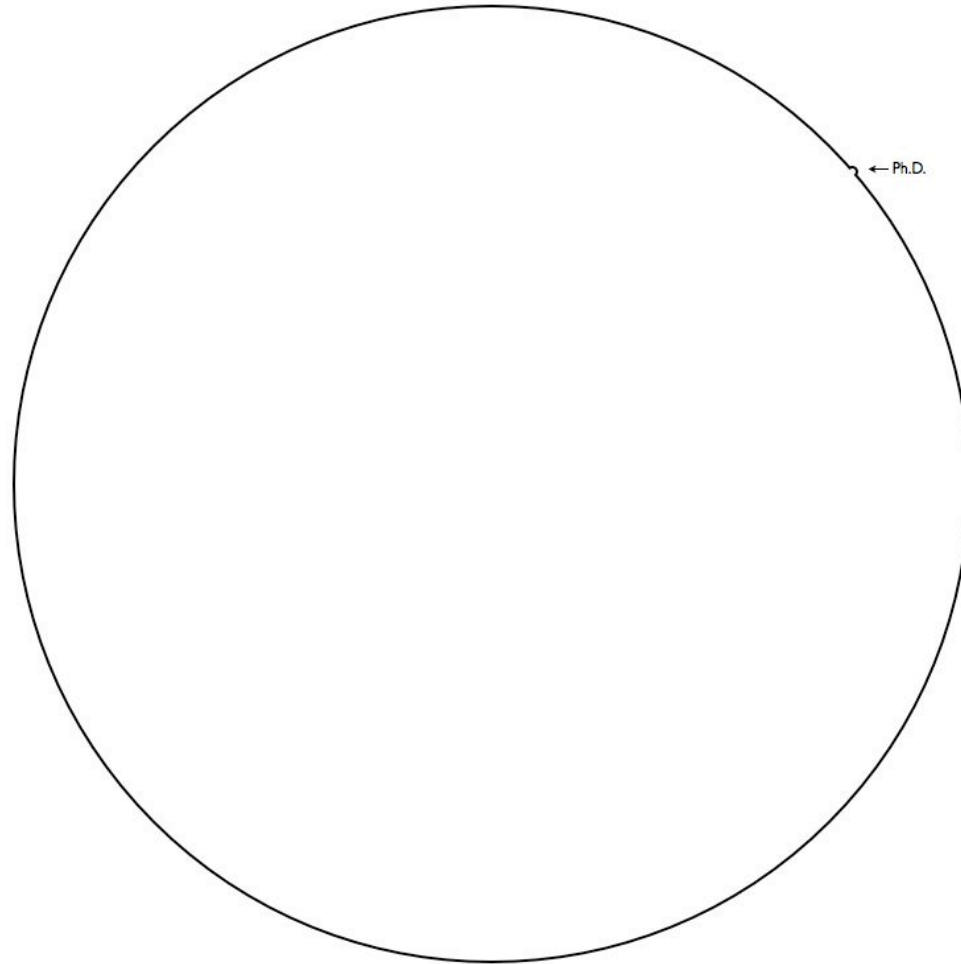
And, that dent you've made is called a Ph.D.



Of course, the world looks different to you now



So, don't forget the bigger picture



Keep pushing

