

Bart Hobijn and Cara McDaniel

**Applying for
Research Assistantships
and/or
Graduate School**

Research-focused career after ASU



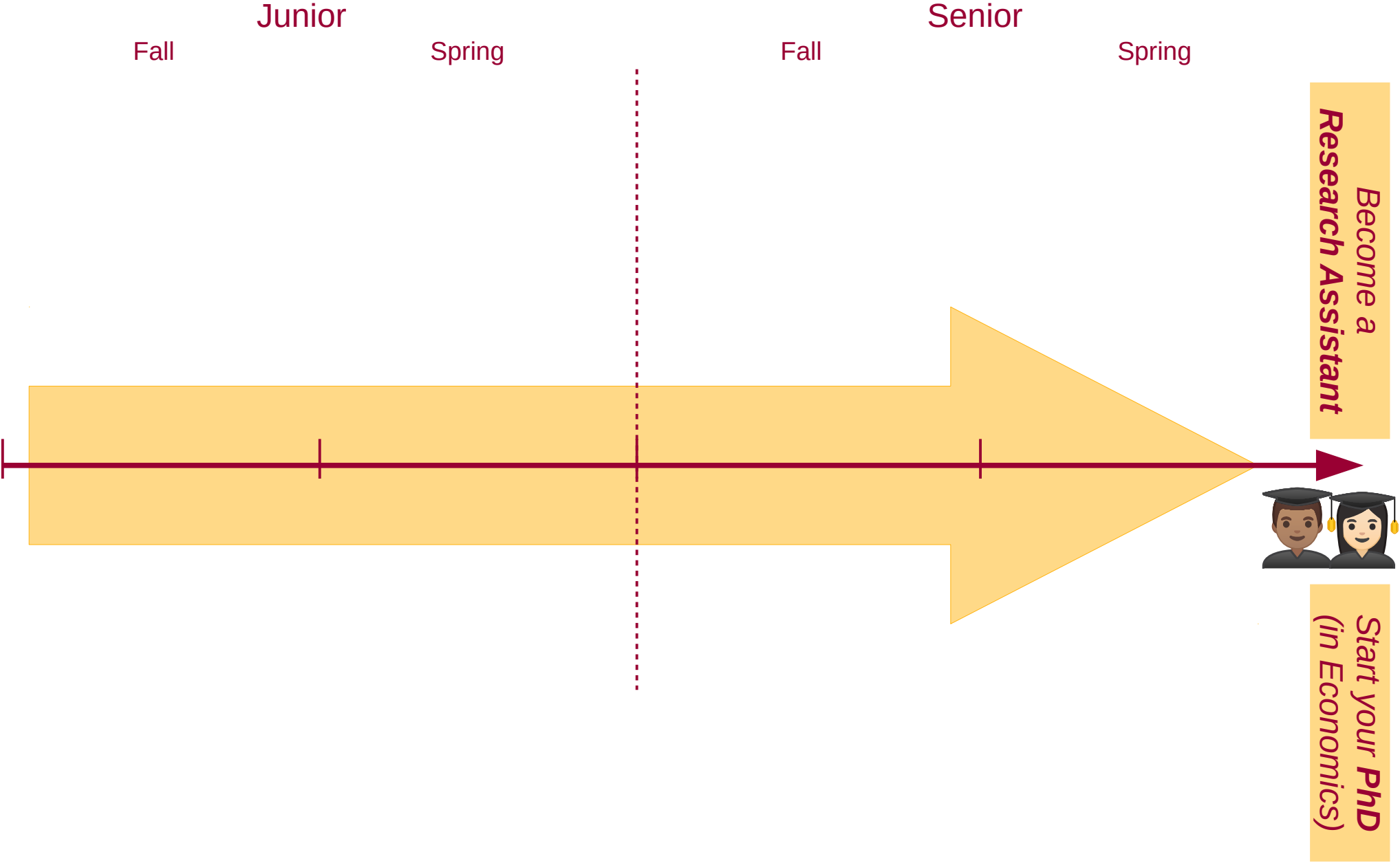
Research assistantships at government agencies

- Federal reserve, CBO, CEA, Treasury, State&Local

Directly moving on to grad school

- Apply for PhD programs in economics

Apply for RA-ship and/or PhD program



Many application items to prepare

Item	Research Assistant Position	Graduate program Econ PhD
Transcript	Necessary	Necessary
Curriculum vitae / Resume	Necessary	Necessary
Letters of recommendation	Necessary	Necessary
GRE score	Useful	Necessary
Writing sample	Useful	Useful
Statement of purpose	Useful	Useful
Cover letter	Necessary	Necessary
Submission fee	None	Necessary

Get an early start preparing your materials

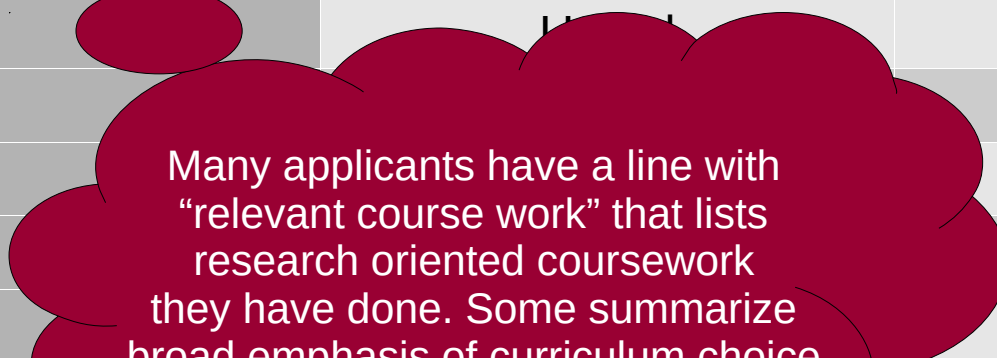
- Getting together and editing materials is time consuming

Look for examples and ask for feedback

- Look for examples on the web
- Ask peers/advisers/career office/professors to review

Emphasize curriculum choice in CV

Item	Research Assistant Position	Graduate program Econ PhD
Transcript	Necessary	Necessary
Curriculum vitae / Resume	Necessary	Necessary
Letters of recommendation	Necessary	Necessary
GRE score	Necessary	Necessary
Writing sample		Useful
Statement of purpose		Useful
Cover letter		Necessary
Submission fee		Necessary



Many applicants have a line with “relevant course work” that lists research oriented coursework they have done. Some summarize broad emphasis of curriculum choice

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Recommendations based on research

Item	Research Assistant Position	Graduate program Econ PhD
Transcript	Necessary	Necessary
Curriculum vitae / Resume	Necessary	Necessary
Letters of recommendation	Necessary	Necessary
GRE score	Useful	Necessary
Writing sample		Useful
Statement of purpose		Useful
Cover letter		Necessary
Submission fee		Necessary



Most impactful letters of recommendation are from faculty with which students have had a working relationship. In particular, with whom they have done research.

Get an early start preparing your materials

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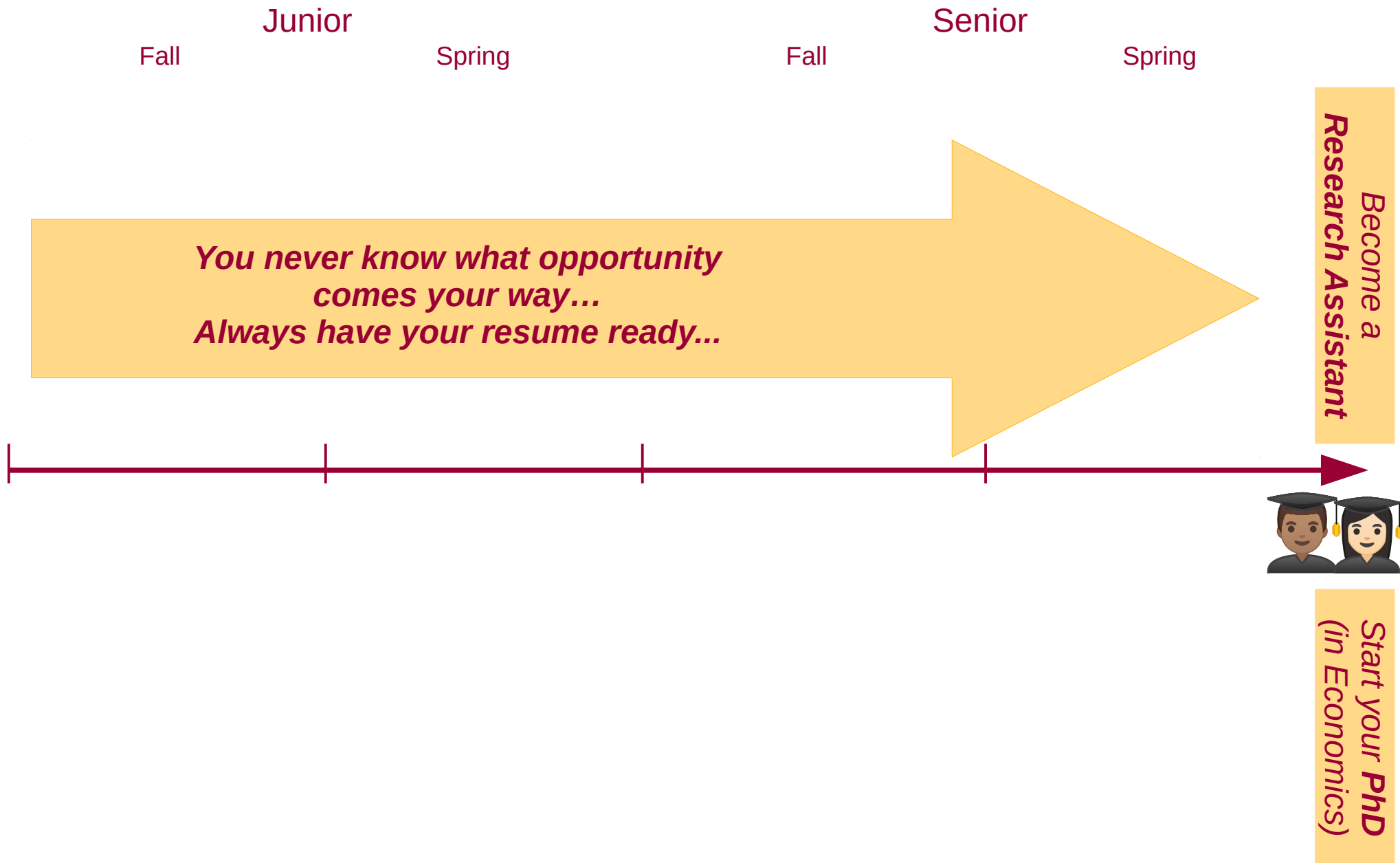
Prioritize when you prepare

Item	Research Assistant Position	Graduate program Econ PhD
Transcript	Standard	Standard
Curriculum vitae / Resume	Very important	Very important
Letters of recommendation	Very important	Very important
GRE score	Not so important	Very important
Writing sample	Important	Important
Statement of purpose	Unimportant	Unimportant
Cover letter	Unimportant	Unimportant
Submission fee	None	Very important

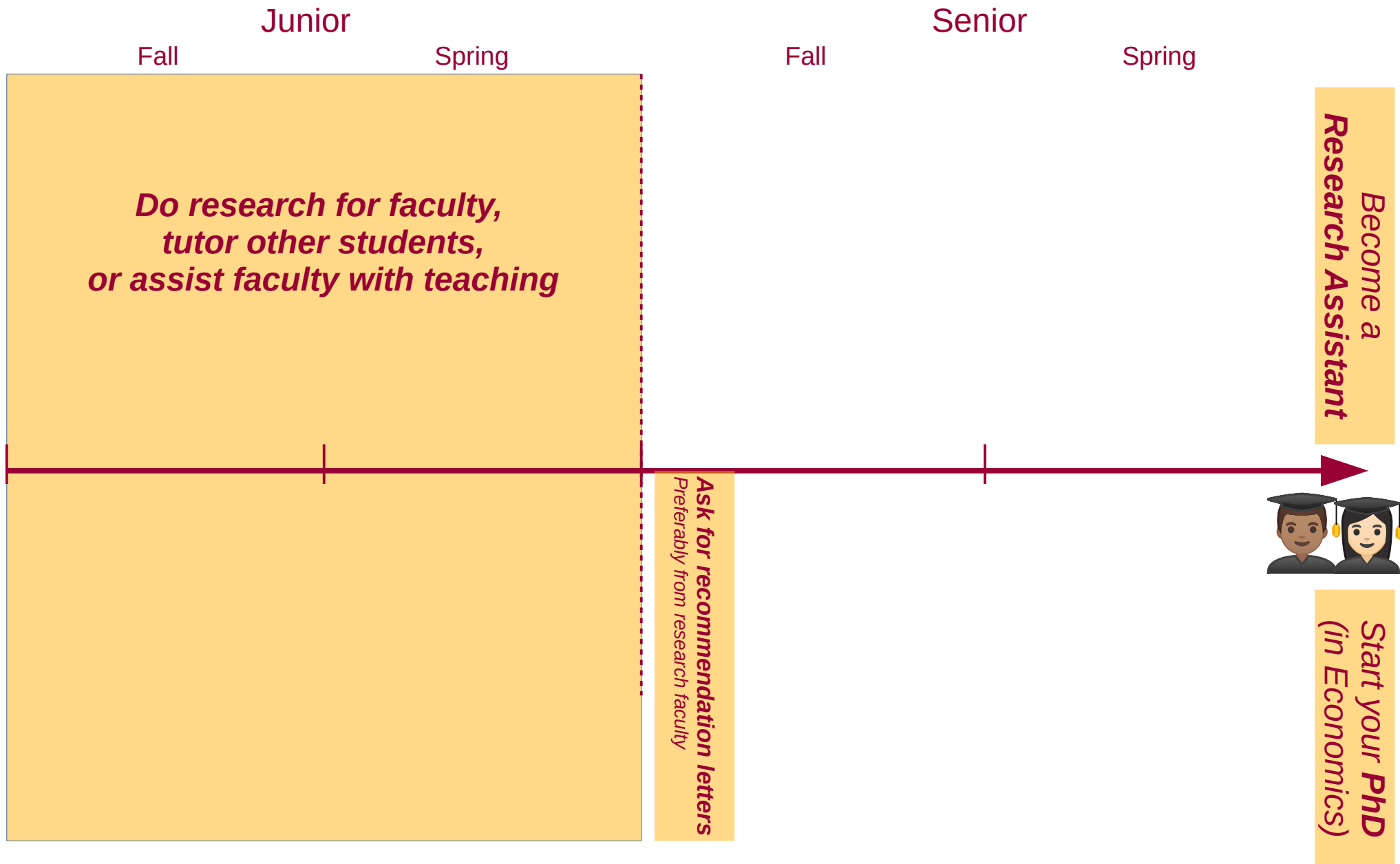
Discuss list of positions/schools you apply to with recommenders

- Makes their letters more focused
- Helps you strategize and (often) aim high
- Prevents you from applying to places that are not good match

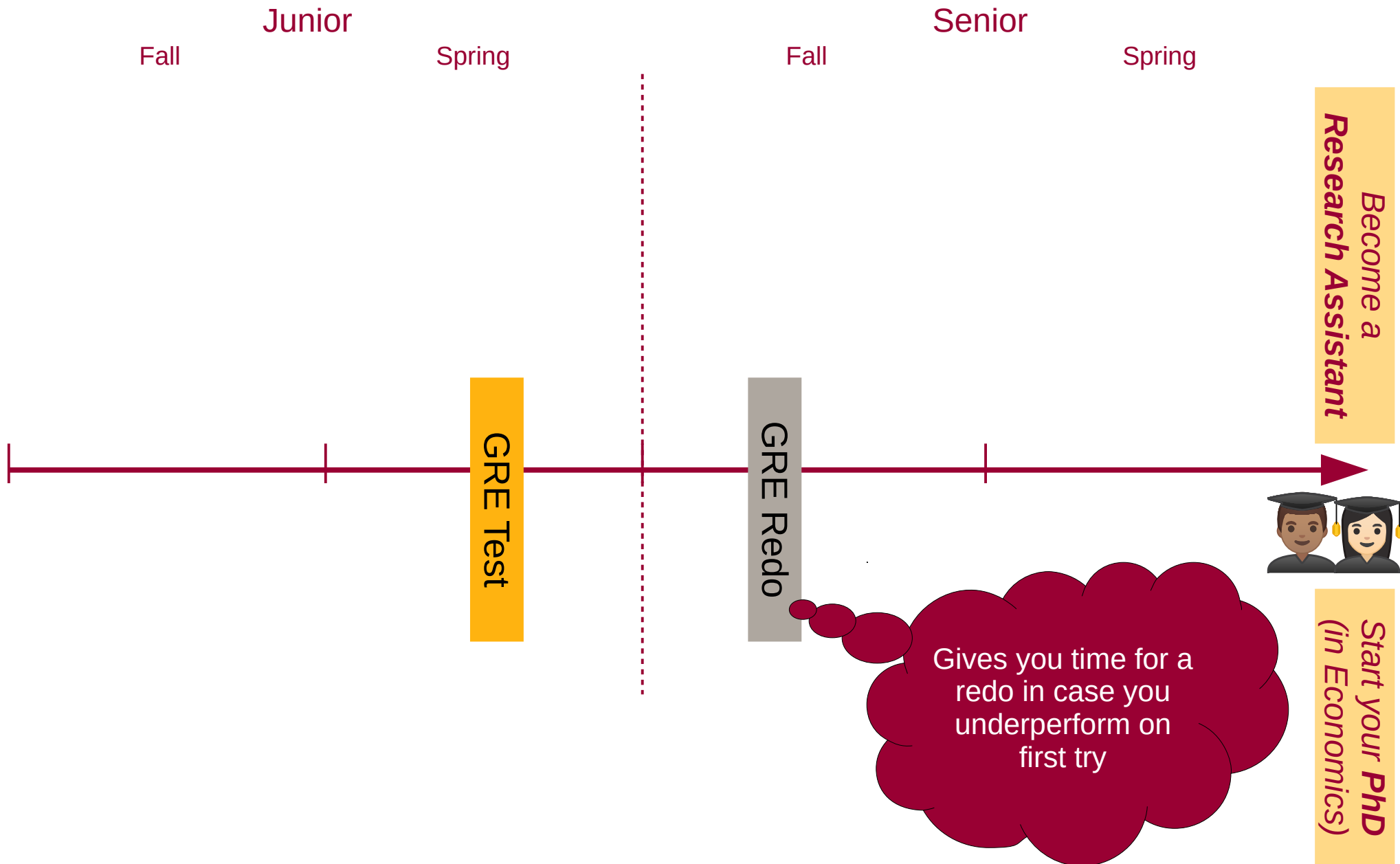
Always maintain an up-to-date CV



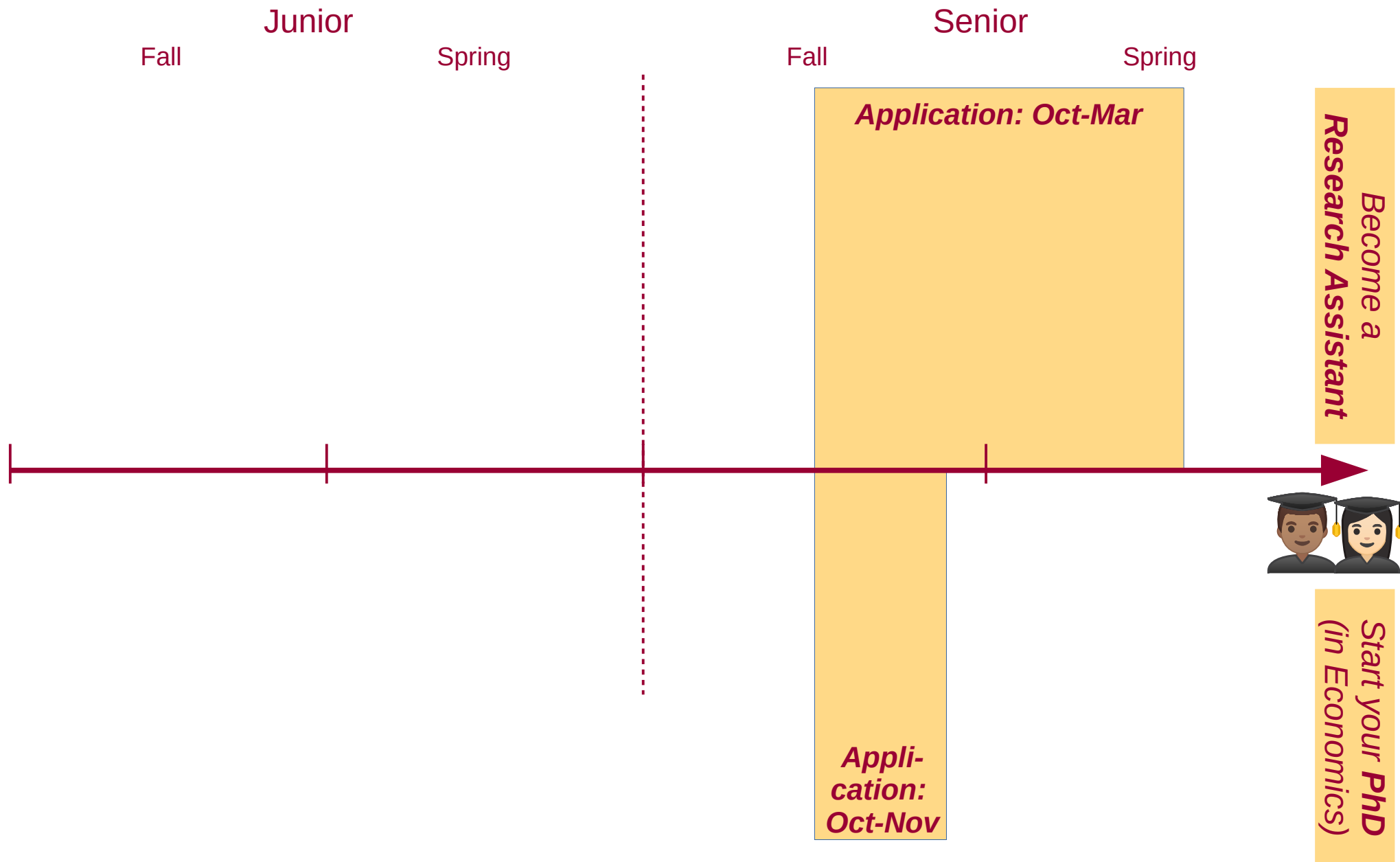
Pursue research opportunities early



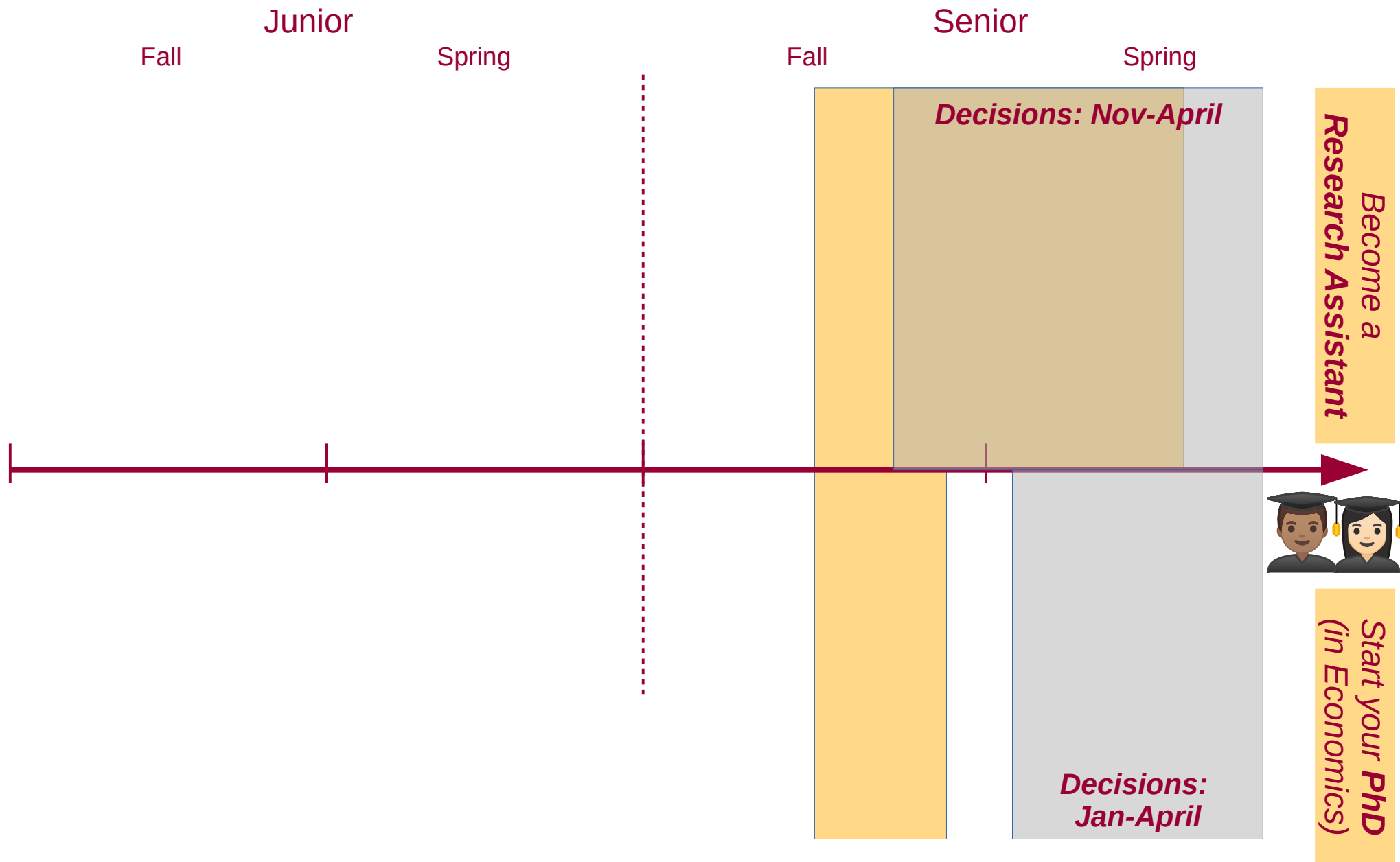
Take the GRE test early



Target the right application windows



Maximize chance of positive outcome



Applying for RA-ships and PhD programs

Make choices now in anticipation of future application

- Choose the curriculum that prepares you best
- Pursue research opportunities on campus early
- Start preparing for your applications in your junior year

Reach out to potential recommenders early

- Preferably faculty you have worked with
- Ask them for advice on where to apply
- Ask for recommendation letters

Preparation of applications is time consuming

- Many different items need to be prepared
- Focus on the ones that are most important