Application Seminar 2:  
Feb 10, 2014

Jason D’Antonio, Ph.D.  
Director, Health Professions Program  
dantonio@andrew.cmu.edu  
412-268-8494

Appointments and general questions:  
hpp-office@andrew.cmu.edu
Last week’s discussion

- Evaluating the strength of your application
- MCAT
- Letters of recommendation
- CMU committee process
- Personal Statements
Outline

• CMU committee process (*review*)
• Personal Statements (*more details*)
• School Selection
• Application services
• Interviews
Outline

• CMU committee process \((\text{review})\)
• Personal Statements \((\text{more details})\)
  • School Selection
  • Application services
  • Interviews
Elements of the (rolling) application

- GPA/transcripts
- Tests
- Committee Interview (also résumé)
- Personal statement
- Letters

- Primary Application
- Secondary Applications
- Interviews

- Spring/Summer: May-June
- July-Aug
- August-April
The CMU committee process

- Simulates the medical admissions interview
- You and 3 interviewers
- 2 hour time slot: ~45-75 minute interview & ~15 minutes of feedback
- Video recorded and available to you
- Fills in the “holes” in your materials, and offers insight about you and your qualifications
- Provides both evaluation and mentoring
- Generates committee letter of recommendation that medical schools prefer
- You will have one letter in the AMCAS system, a “committee letter packet.”

The author of this is Jason D’Antonio, Ph.D.
The CMU committee process

How to schedule:

• Assess when you will be ready
• Required materials
  – All letters of recommendation w/ waiver forms
  – All Non-CMU transcripts (unofficial OK)
  – Personal Statement
  – Résumé
  – MCAT score report (unofficial OK)
• Invite a faculty member you feel will contribute to interview
• Email hpp-office@andrew.cmu.edu with range of desired dates and times, and the name of the faculty member who has agreed to serve on your committee and we will assist in setting a date and time.
The CMU committee process

• Wear what you would wear to a real interview
• Conservative! I.e. cover tattoos, no piercings other than ears.

Women
• Suit (skirt or pants)
• Pantyhose or stockings
• Button down shirt / blouse
• Closed toes, short heels
• Appropriate makeup & jewelry
• Minimal or no perfume
• Professional bag & coat
• Notepad

Men
• Suit and tie
• Dress shoes
• Conservative colors
• Well groomed
• Minimal or no cologne
• Notepad
Personal Statements:

- AMCAS; TMDSAS; ACOMAS
- ADEA AADSAS
  [http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/aadsas/Applicants/Pages/PersonalStatement.aspx](http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/aadsas/Applicants/Pages/PersonalStatement.aspx)

- How to write an effective personal statement:
  - [http://www.thedoctorjob.com/blog/](http://www.thedoctorjob.com/blog/)
  - Why you wish to become a clinician?
  - How you handle difficult decisions/challenging situations?
  - Personal experiences that shaped you.
  - Your personal philosophy and goals.
Personal Statements:

- ~1.3 pages in length
  - 5300 characters in AMCAS application (*includes spaces & returns*)

- Allows you to promote yourself as an individual beyond the numbers
  - Highlight personal qualities: personality, communication skills, problem solving, creativity…

- Make a case for you as a qualified applicant worthy of an interview at all schools where you are applying

- Remember: your PS may become the basis of interview questions

- There must be NO errors!
Personal Statements: topics

- How well you manage life challenges (e.g. a bad semester)
- Your motivation for this career
- Key events that shaped your goals
- Activities, work & volunteer experience (use details)
- Future Plans (be concise)
- Any disciplinary actions may be addressed here and whenever else the info is requested
Personal Statements: do’s

- Prepare before writing (*self exploration and reflection!*)
- Consider your audience, but write what you want
- Be positive about the career
- Give a sense of your personality, priorities and interests → distinguish you from the rest of the applicants
- Use a few illustrative points
- If you begin with a thesis, do you refer back to it in your closing?

Be honest!
Personal Statements: don’ts

• Do NOT plagiarize!
• Avoid:
  – being too creative
  – controversial topics
  – trying to sound too perfect
  – redundancy
  – exotic vocabulary
  – preaching to doctors about doctors
  – using “I” too much

• It is NOT a prose résumé → save this info for your list of 15 experiences on the primary application
Personal Statements: revision

- Did you revise and check for errors/misspelled words?
- Reading it aloud
- Read it in reverse
- Have a friend read it
- Ask the Career Center or the Global Communication Center at CMU
- Set up an appointment and we can review the statement together
- Some interviewers only have your statement – does your PS stand alone?
  - All things on statement are fair game for interviewers
- Use specifics to illustrate your PS rather than general statements
- Check formatting and correctness once you have pasted into the web form!
Outline

• CMU committee process (review)
• Personal Statements (more details)
• School Selection
• Application services
• Interviews
School selection

- MSAR (Medical School Admissions Requirements)
  - [https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/requirements/msar/](https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/requirements/msar/)
  - Selection factors such as MCAT and GPA data
  - Medical school class profiles
  - Application procedures and deadlines
  - Costs and financial aid packages
  - M.D./Ph.D. and other combined degrees

- Osteopathic: [http://www.aacom.org/about/colleges/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.aacom.org/about/colleges/Pages/default.aspx)

- Dental: [http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/aadsas/Pages/PDS.aspx](http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/aadsas/Pages/PDS.aspx)

- Individual school websites → most updated admissions info

- Geography; cost; reputation; research; primary care; family…
School selection: what criteria matter?

- Ranking
- Teaching style
- Grading Style
- Public or Private
- Location
- Mission
- Cost
- Residency
- Citizenship
- Selectivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TUITION &amp; FEES &amp; INS.</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>$12,101</td>
<td>$45,785</td>
<td>$32,197</td>
<td>$30,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NonResident</td>
<td>$22,113</td>
<td>$78,686</td>
<td>$54,625</td>
<td>$53,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident</td>
<td>$19,773</td>
<td>$59,027</td>
<td>$50,078</td>
<td>$48,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NonResident</td>
<td>$31,402</td>
<td>$59,027</td>
<td>$50,768</td>
<td>$49,933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School selection: how many?

- The right number depends on you!

- Primary application is $160 for 1 school + $35 for each additional
  - Secondary applications are typically $25 - $100
  - Assume $50/secondary, 15 schools = $1400 total, not considering travel to interviews

- You should apply to:
  - Reach schools
  - Schools where you are a good match for the typical student
  - Schools where you would be a highly desirable applicant
Outline

• CMU committee process (*review*)
• Personal Statements (*more details*)
• School Selection

• Application services
• Interviews
Application Services:

- AMCAS [https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/amcas/](https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/amcas/)
- TMDSAS [http://www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas/](http://www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas/)
- AACOMAS [https://aacomas.aacom.org/](https://aacomas.aacom.org/)
- ADEA ADSAS [https://portal.aadsasweb.org](https://portal.aadsasweb.org)
The AAMC Fee Assistance Program

https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/fap/

Applicants awarded fee assistance in 2014 calendar year receive:

• MCAT Benefits
  – Reduced Registration and Reschedule Fees
  – Free copy of the book The Official Guide to the MCAT® Exam ($30 value)
  – Authorization code for access to The Official MCAT® Self-Assessment Package
  – Regardless of how many FAP awards your receive, you will only receive MCAT prep benefits one time.

• MSAR Benefits
  – Complimentary access to MSAR Online for one year after activation ($22 value)

• AMCAS Benefits
  – Waiver for all AMCAS fees for up to 15 medical schools ($650 value)
The ADEA Fee Assistance Program

- http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/aadsas/Applicants/GeneralInstructions/Pages/FeeAssistanceProgram.aspx

- Applicants who qualify for Fee Assistance will receive a $244 fee waiver for the first ADEA AADSAS dental school designation. After receiving approval for fee assistance, applicants select one dental school designation and eSubmit the ADEA AADSAS application.

- There is no fee assistance for additional dental school designations ($90 each).
Application Services: FAQs

• How do I convert units to hours/credits?
  – Divide by 3 (done automatically by AMCAS)

• How do I list my activities?
  – Up to 15 are allowed
  – After entering basic data, you can describe the experience in up to 700 characters
  – Up to 3 of the 15 may be flagged as “most meaningful.” For these you get another 1325 characters to explain why.
Applying to medical school

• May 1\textsuperscript{st}: online AMCAS application system opens
  – Applicants start entering personal and academic information

• June 3\textsuperscript{rd}: can submit primary application \(\rightarrow\) verification queue
  – Produce transcript request form \(\rightarrow\) the Hub (hold for spring 2014 grades)
  – Produce ONE letter request form (committee letter) \(w/\) my name \& contact info. Give to me or May Simaan in HPP office. (Bar code and ID #)

• June 27\textsuperscript{th}: AMCAS begins transmitting verified primary applications
  – AMCAS sends application to schools even \(w/o\) MCAT and committee letter
  – MCAT scores auto-sent to schools

• Schools send secondary applications \(\rightarrow\) complete ASAP!
  – 1\textdegree app + transcripts + com letter + 2\textdegree app are required to be considered for interview
Outline

• CMU committee process (review)
• Personal Statements (more details)
• School Selection
• Application services
• Interviews
Interviews: what to wear?

**Women**
- Suit (skirt or pants)
- Pantyhose or stockings
- Button down shirt / blouse
- Closed toes, short heels
- Appropriate makeup & jewelry
- Minimal or no perfume
- Professional bag & coat
- Notepad

**Men**
- Suit and tie
- Dress shoes
- Conservative colors
- Well groomed
- Minimal or no cologne
- Notepad

- Cover tattoos
- No piercings other than ear
What is the purpose of the interview?
1. Compare person to writing
2. Explore communication skills
3. Marketing the school
4. Maturity and motivation
5. Test your grace under pressure
Interview styles

1. One on one
2. Panel
3. Blind - interviewer is “blinded” from your application
4. Partial blind - interviewer has seen only part of your application
5. Multiple mini interviews
Interviews: preparation

• What is your “take home” message?
• Practice, practice
  – HPP committee interview will be video taped & available to you
• Career center
• Faculty
• Fellow classmates/alumni who have interviewed
• Research mentor
  – Prepare to discuss things you have worked on (projects, research, service, athletics, etc.)
Interviews: follow-up

• Write thank you notes immediately following interview

• Send follow up information as it is available (e.g. after summer / fall grades) unless schools ask you not to
  – Personalize the notes as is possible.

• Consider writing “letters of interest” and “letters of intent” when appropriate, but not too soon
  – Letters of intent my be considered legally binding
  – Both allow you to provide updates on your activities
How to reach the HPP office

• Doherty Hall 1319/1324

• Email:
  – Scheduling/general questions - hpp-office@andrew.cmu.edu
  – Jason D’Antonio - dantonio@andrew.cmu.edu
  – May Simaan - simaan@andrew.cmu.edu
  – Veronica Peet - vpeet@andrew.cmu.edu

• Phone: (412) 268-8494
• URL: http://www.cmu.edu/hpp/