HELPING YOUR STUDENTS BUILD THEIR HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPLICATIONS

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OBJECTIVES

• Understand the goals of the health professions application
• Delineate the components of the application
• Review importance of academic performance
• List the types of experiences an applicant may have and understand the unique aspects of each
• Become aware of resources available to your students to help them understand what is needed to become a successful candidate
GOALS OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPLICATION

• Demonstrate ability to succeed academically in a health professions program
• Demonstrate understanding of the profession
• Demonstrate insight into personal strengths and unique characteristics the candidate would bring to the profession

• NOTE: Admissions Committees have their own goals!
COMPONENTS OF A HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPLICATION

• Demographic data
• Academic record
  • GPA
  • Board scores
• Experiences
• Personal comments
ACADEMIC RECORD - GPA

- Evidence candidate can succeed academically in health professions program

- **GPA interpreted several ways**
  - Overall
  - Science and math
  - Pre-requisites
  - Last 2 years

- **Academic development** also assessed using transcripts
  - C in freshman year NOT the same as C in junior year
  - Some programs may use weighted GPA

- Note: retaking classes for grade replacement not universally beneficial
ACADEMIC ADVICE

• There is no “best major” for a pre-health student

• On some level, students have to like science and be able to do math

• There are required pre-requisite courses to apply for any health professions program; they may vary slightly from institution to institution. Students need to do their homework

• Encourage students to challenge themselves
EXPERIENCES

- Work
- Shadowing/clinical
- Volunteer
- Research
- Leadership
- Interests/passions

These are more than boxes to be checked off. Students need to be able to tell people how they have contributed to their personal development.
WORK

- List all work experiences
- Emphasize history of working while a student
- Think about work experiences and work record in relation to the skills, personal traits important to a healthcare provider
SHADOWING

• Has become “gold standard” for demonstrating to others that you understand what your health profession entails
• Sole way to closely observe a provider-patient interaction
• Provides insights into the “mechanics” of the profession
• Gives additional information necessary to make an informed career choice
CLINICAL

• Hands-on work with patients
• Critical for some health professions programs; less so for others
• Can be obtained through paid, volunteer or classroom-related opportunities
VOLUNTEER

• Demonstrates understanding that we are part of a world bigger than ourselves
• Ideally, reflects what the student cares about
• Students should know why they made the activity choices they made
• May or may not occur in hospital setting
RESEARCH

• Acquiring experience using scientific method
• All research uses scientific method; research does not have to be biomedical
• Candidate should understand and be able to talk about the research
• Working in a lab is NOT the same as doing research
INTERESTS/PASSIONS

• These are activities that defy categorization
• Include hobbies, talents, pasttimes
• Demonstrate commitment, effort, mastery of skills
• Provider “wellness” huge concern in the health professions; students need to show they have interests outside of medicine or healthcare
CHALLENGE OF COMMUNICATION

- Applicants must be able to communicate what they have learned
  - about the profession
  - about themselves
- Done through both writing (essays) and speaking (interviews)
- Shortcomings here are probably most common reason students are not accepted into training programs
PERSONAL COMMENTS

• CRITICAL! This is the only opportunity any candidate has to set themselves apart from the pack

• Come in a variety of forms; almost all programs ask for a single page essay

• Writings on an application should be considered as a whole; no repeating info

• Useful prompt: “Why do you think you would be happy taking care of people?”
HELP!

- Sound complicated? It is!
- Seem difficult? It is!!
- Do you have to do this alone? ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!
OFFICE OF PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

• Informational workshops
  • “Building the Strongest Health Professions Application”
  • “Shadowing Orientation and Credentialing”
  • “Creating an Effective Personal Statement”
  • “Preparing for a Health Professions Interview”

• Individual advisement
  • Students must email for an appt: prehealthprofessions@unm.edu

• Interview preparation
  • Mock interviews, in collaboration with the Office of Career Services
COMMERCIAL!

- 4th UNM Health Professions Symposium
- Saturday, April 18, 2020    UNM SUB
- 90 different workshops/info sessions
- 90 minute information table session
- FREE!    LUNCH PROVIDED!

- For more info, and to register, visit the website:

  hps.unm.edu