

# **MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR FRESHMEN YEAR**

## ***PLANNING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL IN THE MEDICAL OR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS***

During college, the successful premedical student completes several important tasks; he or she:

- ? Selects a personally challenging major
- ? Completes required premedical courses in a timely fashion
- ? Establishes an ongoing relationship with an informed advisor
- ? Participates in a variety of extracurricular experiences
- ? Masters both course content and academic skills
- ? Balances intellectual development with social and interpersonal growth

*Recommendations from the Association of American Medical Colleges*

### **ACADEMIC PREPARATION**

#### **Choice of Major**

No medical school requires a specific major of its applicants. Admission committee members know that medical students can develop the essential skills of acquiring, synthesizing, applying and communicating information through a wide variety of academic disciplines.

Choosing a science based major allows a student to complete many science courses required for admission to professional school while fulfilling undergraduate degree requirements. Choosing a science based major but does not necessarily enhance one's chances for admission to medical school. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, in the 2000-2001 entering class for medical schools nation-wide 43% of all biology, 48% of all other science related, and 49% of all non-science majors were accepted. Medical school admission committees seek students whose intellectual curiosity leads them to a variety of disciplines and whose intellectual maturity assures that their efforts are persistent and disciplined.

#### **How to Choose a Major?**

Remember, there is no such thing as a pre-med, pre-vet, pre-optometry, pre-pharmacy, etc. major. **You can major in anything.** Pre-medical students should use the same criteria for choosing a major that other students use:

- ? What discipline is most interesting and most challenging?
- ? Which field draws best on your talents and abilities?
- ? Where will you do your best work?
- ? How many liberal arts classes would you like to take? Your undergraduate years will be your last opportunity to take courses in the arts, literature, and humanities.

## **Acquiring Knowledge**

? **Learn course content for the long-run and not to just merely pass the exam.** Standardized tests for professional schools will require you to use knowledge from all of your previous courses. Cramming for tests in the short term will not benefit you in the long term.

### ? **Developing Academic Skills**

Learn how to learn, organize materials, retain information, and manage your time. This will help you become acclimated with the differences between high school and college. Workshops about study skills, test-taking, note-taking, reading, and time management will benefit you, even if you already have strong academic skills.

## **Courses/Science Preparation**

The study and practice of medicine is based on modern concepts in biology, chemistry, and physics, and on an appreciation of the scientific method. Mastery of basic science principles is expected. Medical schools appreciate mathematical competence as a strong foundation for understanding the basic sciences. See the *East Carolina University Planning for Graduate Study in Medical and Allied Health Professions* brochure for course listings.

## **HEALTH PROFESSIONS KNOWLEDGE**

Expand your knowledge of health care to be sure that the career you select is right for you. Ways to expand your knowledge include:

- ? Reading newspapers
- ? Speaking with health care professionals
- ? Researching health professions on the internet

## **HEALTH PROFESSIONS EXPERIENCE**

Research admissions requirements for professional schools. Do they require volunteer experiences, shadowing experiences, or actual work experience in health care? Some resources to assist you in finding hands-on experiences are your advisor, professors and personal physicians. Just call the Center at 328-2802 or stop by Christenbury to find volunteer opportunities with more than 120 different organizations. The Volunteer Center provides free liability insurance while you volunteer and officially tracks your volunteer hours. These hours can then be used for your résumé, graduate or professional school application, or to apply for scholarships. The Academic Enrichment Center and the Brody School of Medicine sponsor the **Primary Care Physician's Shadowing Program** each year. You may apply for the program at the end of your freshmen year. Participants must be entering their sophomore or second year and have an overall grade point average of 3.3.

Examples of service activities include:

- ? Working in a health-care setting
- ? Caring for an ill or elderly family member
- ? Participating in basic or clinical science research
- ? Working as an emergency medical technician
- ? Shadowing a physician

- ? Providing emotional support to people in a rape crisis center, emergency room or social service agency

### **DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**

Academic and scientific accomplishment alone is not sufficient to be admitted to the medical profession. The most critical aspect of practicing medicine is the physician-patient relationship. **Motivation, persistence and communication** are key. According to a publication outlining the learning objectives for all medical students, the AAMC reported that, while expected to be knowledgeable and skillful physicians are also expected to be dutiful and altruistic. [www.aamc.org/meded/msop/start.htm](http://www.aamc.org/meded/msop/start.htm)

The AAMC has defined dutifulness and altruism. Dutifulness is defined as:

- ? An appreciation of the complex non-biological determinants of poor health
- ? An awareness of community and public health issues
- ? The ability to identify risk factors for disease
- ? A commitment to the early identification and treatment of disease
- ? An acceptance of the responsibility for making scientifically based medical decisions and for advocating for the care of the underserved
- ? An understanding of basic issues in health care financing and delivery

Altruism is defined as involving:

- ? Ethical decision-making
- ? Compassion, respect, honesty, and integrity
- ? Collaborative work with other team members
- ? Advocating for one's patients
- ? Sensitivity to potential conflicts of interest
- ? The capacity to recognize one's limits
- ? The commitment to continuously improve one's knowledge and abilities

### **GOALS FOR THE FRESHMEN YEAR**

**What you do beginning in August will determine what you do four years from now!**

- ? Decide on an undergraduate major. See an advisor for assistance.
- ? Begin completing courses.
- ? Establish good study habits and obtain a strong grade point average (3.0 or above)
- ? Attend workshops offered by the Academic Enrichment Center <http://www.ecu.edu/advising/aec/aec.htm> and the Center for Counseling and Student Development [http://www.ecu.edu/studentlife/counseling\\_center/](http://www.ecu.edu/studentlife/counseling_center/)
- ? Identify medically related summer employment or volunteer opportunities. Visit the Volunteer Center in 110 Christenbury Gym or [www.ecu.edu/volunteer](http://www.ecu.edu/volunteer).
- ? Investigate undergraduate pre-health organizations. Research groups at <http://at.ecu.edu/org/>
- ? Get to know your science professors.
- ? Clarify your career choice. <http://online.onetcenter.org/>
- ? Begin investigating professional schools and admission requirements. [www.aamc.org/students](http://www.aamc.org/students)

### **INTERNET RESOURCES**

**Health Professions Resources** <http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/%7Eknauft/resources/index.html>

**Applying for Medical School**

The Association of American Medical Colleges

<http://www.aamc.org/students/applying/start.htm>

Medical Schools of the US and Canada <http://www.aamc.org/members/listings/msalphae.htm>

The Student Doctor Network [http://www.studentdoctor.net/guide/application/apps\\_process/](http://www.studentdoctor.net/guide/application/apps_process/)

**Applying for Dental School**

The Dental Students Network [http://www.studentdoctor.net/dental/how\\_to\\_get\\_in.html](http://www.studentdoctor.net/dental/how_to_get_in.html)

Dental Schools in the US and Canada <http://www.dentalschooladmission.com/Dental-Schools.htm>

**Applying to Pharmacy School**

The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

<http://www.aacp.org/index.asp?TrackID=>

**Applying for Veterinary School**

Preparing for a Career in Veterinarian Medicine <http://aavmc.org/prevet/prevet.htm>

Veterinary Admissions and Enrollment Statistics <http://aavmc.org/stats2.htm>

Veterinarian Medical Schools <http://aavmc.org/schools/schools.htm>

**Medical and Allied Health Majors**

Brody School of Medicine <http://www.ecu.edu/med/>

Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences <http://www.artsci.ecu.edu/cas/>

School of Allied Health <http://www.ecu.edu/ah/>

School of Health and Human Performance <http://www.ecu.edu/hhp/>

School of Nursing <http://www.nursing.ecu.edu/>

**ECU ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTERS**

**Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Psychology**

Thomas Harriot College of Arts & Sciences

Bate Advising Center, 2300 Bate Building

(252) 328-1084

**Clinical Laboratory Science, Health Information Management, Health Services Management, Rehabilitation Services**

Bate Advising Center, 2300 Bate Building

(252) 328-1084

**Exercise and Sports Science, Exercise Physiology, Health Education and Promotion, Environmental Health, Recreational Therapy, School Health Education**

A016 Minges

(252) 328-4661

**Communication Science & Disorders**

Belk Annex 2

**Nursing**

1089 Rivers Building

(252)328-6075

**Nutrition & Dietetics, Child Life**

142 Rivers Building

(252) 328-4273

**Physics**

N209 Howell Science Complex

(252) 328-6476

**Undecided**

Brewster A-113

(252) 328-6001

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