Post-Bac Programs

Barry S. Rothman, Ph.D.
Professor of Biology
Chair, Health Professions Advisory Committee
Director, Formal Post-Bac Program
Director, Dental Post-Bac Program

AMS A Conference
Mar 5, 2011
E-Mail: brothman@sfsu.edu

Web: http://online.sfsu.edu/~brothman/

Office: HH-221

Hours: Tues, 4:00-6:00 pm & Weds, 11:15 am-12:45 pm

Phone: 338-2418 (no voice mail)
The Basics

- **Post-Bacs** are pre-health students who have already earned a Bachelor’s degree, but still need to take and/or retake pre-health course work.

- **Post-Bac Programs** provide pre-health course work, as well as academic, career and emotional support to Post-Bacs.
Types of Post-Bacs
Career-Changers

- Have taken few or no health profession graduate school pre-reqs

- In most cases:
  - *Were non-science majors as undergrads*
    - Interested in medicine but turned off by science courses and/or pre-meds
  - *Have been in the work force for a year or more*
    - Interest in medicine resurfaces, now more confident
Career-Changer Curriculum

Core Classes

■ Pre-Calculus & Calculus I
■ GChem I & II, lect/lab
■ OChem I & II, lect/lab
■ Physics I & II, lect/lab
■ Biology I & II, lect/lab
Career-Changer Curriculum

Electives

■ 2\textsuperscript{nd}-Tier
  - Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Genetics, Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology

■ Advanced
  - E.g., Cellular Neuro, Endo, Biophysics

■ Key Non-Science Courses
  - Public Health, CAM, Languages
Academic Enhancers

- Have taken most or all pre-reqs
- Have not performed well in:
  - Course work and/or
  - Standardized tests (MCAT, DAT, etc.)
- In most cases, Biological science majors; may have faced many obstacles
- Two Types:
  - Reapplicants
  - First-time applicants
GPA Profiles

- Ideal
- Improver (common)
- Erratic
- Bad Ending

[Graph depicting GPA profiles with lines representing different outcomes: Ideal, Improver (common), Erratic, Bad Ending.]
GPA Profiles

1-2 Yr Academic Enhancer

Transition Period
*Identify problem
*Seek help

F      S      J      S
F      S      J      S

2
3
4
Academic Enhancer Curriculum

- Retake Pre-Reqs with low grades
  - C, C+ = Maybe
  - C- and below = Must retake

- Take/Retake 2nd-Tier Science Courses
  - Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Genetics, Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology

- Take/Retake Advanced Science Courses
  - E.g., Cellular Neuro, Endo, Biophysics

- Take/Retake Key “Non-Science” Courses
  - Public Health, CAM, languages,
AET Application Strategies

- Overcoming obstacles and coming from underrepresented groups does help gain admission to health profession schools.

- However, low undergrad GPA ($\leq 2.6$) can be a difficult problem.

- Consider Osteopathic Med Schools
  - More holistic review of files
  - More forgiving of GPA and MCATs
AET Application Strategies

- Reapplicants
  - Often best to take more than one year to improve record
  - Document clearly how you have improved since you last applied
Post-Bac Programs
Structured PB Programs

- Most offered by four-year universities
- Large variety of courses with guaranteed enrollment and substantial advising
  - Self-supported (financed by tuition) and thus pricey - $500 to $1,200 per unit
  - Extramural funding (financed by grants) and thus less expensive; tend to focus on socioeconomically challenged and underrepresented groups of students.
- Good financial aid options if degree or certificate conferred
Financial Aid

- Most structured programs qualify for financial aid
- File a FAFSA early!!
- Cost is ~10%-20% of medical school costs
  - Post-Bac = $10K - $80K
  - Med School = $200K - $400K
Unstructured PB Programs

- Small to large variety of courses, without guaranteed admission and with little or no advising.
- Offered by both four-year universities and community colleges
- Tend to be less expensive - $30 to $300 per unit
- May have few or no financial aid options
- Many have collapsed due to lack of funding
Post-Bac Program Stats

- AAMC lists 107 Post-Bac Programs
  - 64 for Career-Changers
  - 61 for Academic Enhancers
  - 30 for Underrepresented Groups
  - 24 for Disadvantaged Students

- Many other programs not listed, most unstructured
  - Try online search
California PB Programs
North (N=4)

- SFSU: CCT, AET
  - Dent PB: AET, UR, Disadv
- UCB Ex: CCT, AET
  - UCSF-Affiliated (AET, UR, Disadv)
- CSU-EB: CCT, AET
- Mills: CCT
California PB Programs
South (N=8)

- CSU-LA: AET, UR, Disadv
- CSU-Fullerton: CCT
- UCLA-Drew: CCT, UR, Disadv
- UCSD: CCT
- Keck: AET
- Scripps: CCT
- USC: CCT
- Western: AET, UR, Disadv