Post-Bac Advising Workshop

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Strong Applicants:

- Understand the principles and vocabularies of biology, chemistry, and physics.
- Have adequate experience in biology, chemistry, and physics lab courses.
- Are competent in math - calculus, statistics and computer use.
- Have performed well in non-science courses.
Strong Applicants:

- Have participated in honors and/or independent study courses.
- Have "real world" clinical and/or research experience.
- Communicate effectively in English, both verbally and in writing.
- Are able to speak another language besides English.
Strong Applicants:

- Relate effectively with other people and other cultures.
- Demonstrate leadership and commitment, especially when focused on an underserved community.
- Have a clear understanding of the current health care system in the US, including its trends, efficiencies and limitations.
Applicant Evaluation

- The Big Three:
  - Academic Performance
  - National Test Scores
  - Clinical and/or Research Experience

- All three must be strong!
  - One can’t make up for another
Academic Performance

- BCPM, Other, All
- Semester-by-Semester Trajectory
  - Upward trends are good
  - Overall GPA is meaningless
- Courses Taken
  - Pre-Reqs and Electives
- Schools Attended
  - Private vs. UC vs. CSU vs. JC
Academic Performance

- Best to have two final years of full-time academic performance with grades of B to A; ~3.5 GPA
  - This demonstrates sustained, high-level academic performance
Never take a real test as “practice”

Commercial courses
- Add discipline and helpful materials
- Can lull into a sense of complacency
  - Tend to overestimate scores
  - Be responsible for own learning

Studying on your own
- Less expensive
- Great if you are very disciplined
Clinical & Research Experience

- Clinical experience is a reality test
  - Work in more than one setting

- Research experience is good if you are truly interested
  - Don’t take on if not interested
  - Get name on publications
Applicant Evaluation

- Other Areas:
  - Obstacles Overcome
  - Diversity
  - Leadership
  - Motivation
Applicant Evaluation

- **Sources of Information:**
  - *Primary Application*
    - Personal Statement
    - Academic Record
    - Experiences
  - *Letters*
  - *Secondary Application*
  - *Interview*
Personal Statement

- Opening Paragraph
  - Shows your character
- Obstacles or Use of Resources
- Academic Record
- Motivation
- Leadership and Advocacy
- Competence
- Future Practice
Letters

- **Types:**
  - *Science Faculty* – usually 2 needed
  - *Non-Science Faculty* - optional
  - *Clinical and Research Experiences*
  - *Employment*
  - *Other Volunteer Activities*

- Committee Letters add value to your application
- Joint letters can be more effective
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

■ 2nd-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; faced many obstacles

- Two Types:
  - Reapplicants
  - First-time applicants
GPA Profiles

F      S      J      S
F      S      J      S

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
Academic Enhancer Curriculum

- Retake Pre-Reqs with low grades
  - \( C, C+ = \text{Maybe} \)
  - \( C- \text{ and below} = \text{Must retake} \)

- Take/Retake 2\textsuperscript{nd}-Tier Science Courses
  - \textit{Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Genetics, Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology}

- Take/Retake Advanced Science Courses
  - \textit{E.g., Cellular Neuro, Endo, Biophysics}

- Take/Retake Key “Non-Science” Courses
  - \textit{Public Health, CAM, languages,}
Sadly, Allopathic Med Schools and Dental Schools seem unforgiving of low undergrad GPA (≤ 2.6) no matter how much improvement!!

Consider Osteopathic Med Schools

- More holistic review of files
- More forgiving of GPA and MCATs
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

- 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

- 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