**Applying to Medical School**

**The Personal Statement** - Good example: “The most amazing experience that I had during my shadowing was listening as a doctor told an old man that he had cancer. The prognosis was not good, but the doctor showed a compassion that was equal to any technical skill. I want to be that kind of doctor.” It should be about your career, treat it as if it is your 1st job application. Should contain evidence that you can see quality of doctor/pt relationship. Should focus on adult career aspirations, not childhood memories. Focus on PEOPLE, not machines. (Not dissecting cat, taking care of human being). USE past experiences to validate future aspirations (don’t just say, I’ve done this and that). Relate activities to passion. Avoid hackneyed and repetitive language: “I was given the opportunity…” and wordy metaphors. Clean your facebook page. NEVER fake any part of your resume.

**Activities** – show who you are. “Rounding the bases” – perfunctory shadowing, research, community service) looks insincere and will be noticed.. You should demonstrate passion, compassion, curiosity, and insight into each activity that you showcase. At least one of your activities should be leadership. Research: be able to explain it, say if papers are coming, ect. Community service: show leadership, not just occasional volunteering. Shadowing: see humans, not gee-whiz miracles. There’s no safety in camouflage when applying to medical school.

**MCAT** – (3 sections: VR, PS, BS) Well focus on VR: Do not neglect VR, tends to be student’s lowest score, anchor for other 2 scores. It responds least to late preparation. Verbal comprehension comes with reading: Jane Austin (complex, serious adult reading, for Juniors maybe 1 book a month, Toni Morrison). Skipping the hard questions and coming back to them doesn’t work. Answer all the questions on each passage. New MCAT will enhance VR section.

**Interview** - Being invited to an interview means you have more than met the minimum requirements for the school, so don’t focus on that. Make yourself stand out. Do not bore interviewers by presenting yourself as a premed student. (skip that part). Instead, open up as a person. Be prepared to tell who you want to be as a doctor. Use your activities to showcase your passion, compassion, insight, curiosity. Have some intelligent, individualized question about the interviewing medical school – take an interest in the school! (You want someone to show interest in you, show interest in them). How does this school fit with me? They are proposing to invest lots of money in you, to entrust you with critical decisions on which lives depend, hire you to be part of teams (not a doctor), and hire you to be a front line service worker with patients who are often extraordinarily stressed. They want to see someone with solid commitment, whose judgment is informed, creative, and prudent, not a prima donna, and someone who has mature patience, compassion, and empathy for all kinds of people, (What is your experience with diverse peoples?). Have cross-cultural experience – speak multiple languages!

**Questions**:

Does the number of “I’s” used in personal statement affect acceptance? No, just make sure you don’t make it all about you and your ego. Show empathy.

What should we consider when deciding where to apply? Ask students whether or not professors are accessible? Ask to what extent the school accommodates the area of medicine you are passionate about.

Is it okay to talk about criticism you have about doctors you’ve experienced? Do not say you’ve experienced cold and distant doctors – stay positive on doctors. It’s okay to talk about criticism as it relates to healthcare systems. Interviews partially scored on intellectual curiosity! Example of question: “If you were in charge of healthcare system, what kinds of changed would you implement?” Be knowledgeable and curious! Know current news, politics. Example of question may be to talk about components of Obamacare and what you think about them.

Apply before or after a year abroad/ gaining experience? It doesn’t matter.

If you have bad grades or something you need to explain, do it in the interview.

The interviewer writes report that includes a score – input is simply one factor of many in your application.