Your Masters Year at Bloomberg: Planning and Priorities in Preparing to Apply to Medical School

David Verrier, PhD, Premedical Advising Consultant, Bloomberg School of Public Health

Katherine Summerton, BA, MHS, Medical School Applicant '19

Thursday, September 6th, 6:00 pm, Becton Dickinson Hall (W1020)

This program is designed for students pursing masters degrees at the Bloomberg School with intentions of applying to medical school the year following. The focus will be on making the most of your masters year experience at Johns Hopkins, both academically and through experiences outside of the classroom. Topics will include what medical schools are looking for in applicants, the medical school application cycle, the MCAT and MCAT preparation, how to put yourself in the most competitive position possible, self-assessment, and looking ahead to the application/gap year. Masters students who are current applicants to medical school are also invited to attend.
YOUR MASTERS YEAR AT BLOOMBERG
PLANNING AND PRIORITIES IN PREPARING TO APPLY TO MEDICAL SCHOOL

David Verrier, PhD.
JHSPH Premedical Advising Consultant

Katherine Summerton, MHS-BMB ’18
Medical School Applicant ’19

Thursday, September 6th, 6:00 pm, Becton Dickinson Hall (W1020)
INTRODUCTIONS

David Verrier
- (retired) Director, Pre-Professional Programs and Advising, Johns Hopkins University
- (part-time) Success Coach, Center for Student Success, JHU
- (part-time) Premedical Advising Consultant, Bloomberg School of Public Health, JHU

Katherine Summerton
- BA, Global Studies, University of North Carolina, 2015
- MHS, Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2018
- Clinical Research Coordinator, Center for Genetic Muscle Disorders, Kennedy Krieger Institute
WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

- Your Masters Year at Bloomberg!
- Facts about Medical School Admissions
- What are medical schools looking for?
- The MCAT and MCAT preparation
- The Medical School Application Cycle
- Letters of Recommendation
- Researching Medical Schools
- The Osteopathic Option
- Self-assessment and Reflection
- Upcoming programs at SHP
- Summary and Closing Thoughts
YOUR MASTERS YEAR AT BLOOMBERG!

- You will likely transform your application!
- You will have the opportunity to highlight graduate coursework
- Will take the MCAT with a strong background and preparation
- You will gain new and important experiences to round out your application
- You will seek out new mentors, build relationships with amazing faculty, advisors, and peers
- Timing issues will be in your favor—working with 2 gap/glide years
- Being at Bloomberg, at Johns Hopkins, and Baltimore!
CHALLENGES OF APPLYING AS A GRADUATE STUDENT

- Working with your home institution
- Applying as non-traditional aged
- Undergraduate coursework vs. graduate coursework
- BCPM GPA
- Letters of recommendation
- Priorities and decision-making!
- Timing – additional year – time is on your side!
ACADEMIC CHOICES

- How heavy a course load should I take? How heavy a science course load? What electives make the most sense? What is the right balance?

- So many choices... How can I best take advantage of all JHSPH has to offer?

- What courses will most impact my application to medical school?

- How should I approach getting the most out of the program academically?

- Are there specific courses that will help my employability?

PLUS

- Understanding how graduate and undergraduate GPA will be represented

Prioritize and take initiative!
EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

Again, prioritize and take initiative!
FAC T S  A B O U T  M E D I C A L  S C H O O L  A D M I S S I O N S

Allopathic Medicine (MD) — entry year fall 2017

- 147 US medical schools; 17 Canadian medical schools
- 51,680 applicants
- 21,338 matriculants (74.5% total)
- 50.4% male applicants; 49.6% female applicants
- 24 – mean age at matriculation
- 3.71 – mean total GPA of matriculants
- 3.64 – math/science GPA of matriculants
- 510.4 – mean MCAT of matriculants
FACTS ABOUT MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Osteopathic Medicine (DO) — entry year fall 2017

- 34 medical schools at 51 locations in 32 states
- 20,836 applicants
- 7,317 matriculants (25.5% total)
- 50.8% male applicants; 49.2% female applicants
- 24 – mean age at matriculation
- 3.53 – mean overall GPA (all levels) of matriculants
- 3.43 – mean math/science GPA (all levels) of matriculants
- 503.1 – mean MCAT of matriculants

http://www.aacom.org/data/Pages/default.aspx
# Facts About Medical School Admissions

## Recent Metrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
<th>2017-2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCAT Total – Applicants</td>
<td>501.8</td>
<td>504.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCAT Total – Accepted</td>
<td>508.7</td>
<td>510.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA Total – Applicants</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA Total – Accepted</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.71</td>
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</table>
Table 2. Percentage and Number of 2017 Applicants Accepted Into at Least One Medical School, by MCAT Total Score and Undergraduate GPA Range

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<thead>
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<tbody>
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<td>3.80–4.00</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>89%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/51</td>
<td>5/98</td>
<td>23/241</td>
<td>111/528</td>
<td>353/1,040</td>
<td>920/1,692</td>
<td>1,538/2,310</td>
<td>1,870/2,461</td>
<td>1,798/2,112</td>
<td>1,796/2,014</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.60–3.79</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/126</td>
<td>3/223</td>
<td>5/234/42</td>
<td>129/867</td>
<td>364/1,420</td>
<td>764/1,996</td>
<td>1,388/2,040</td>
<td>1,870/2,461</td>
<td>1,798/2,112</td>
<td>1,796/2,014</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.40–3.59</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4/183</td>
<td>2/293</td>
<td>22/552</td>
<td>100/955</td>
<td>265/1,286</td>
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<td>3.20–3.39</td>
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<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/226</td>
<td>1/306</td>
<td>14/527</td>
<td>64/749</td>
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<td>246/1,027</td>
<td>279/873</td>
<td>255/631</td>
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<td>63/109</td>
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<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<td>2/181</td>
<td>5/201</td>
<td>12/238</td>
<td>14/233</td>
<td>34/203</td>
<td>40/160</td>
<td>25/84</td>
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<td>2.60–2.79</td>
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<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<td>18%</td>
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<td>0/142</td>
<td>0/132</td>
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<td>10/57</td>
<td>17/86</td>
<td>6/36</td>
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<td>2.40–2.59</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/118</td>
<td>1/57</td>
<td>1/48</td>
<td>1/59</td>
<td>1/40</td>
<td>4/30</td>
<td>4/24</td>
<td>4/17</td>
<td>1/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.20–2.39</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>12%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0/69</td>
<td>0/29</td>
<td>0/24</td>
<td>0/21</td>
<td>2/17</td>
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<td>3%</td>
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<td>less than 2.00</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Blue = Accept rates > 75%
Green = Accept rates 50–74%
Orange = Accept rates 25–49%
Table of Verified GPAs on the AMCAS Application

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<th>Status</th>
<th>BCPM GPA</th>
<th>BCPM Hours</th>
<th>AO GPA</th>
<th>AO Hours</th>
<th>Total GPA</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>High School</td>
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<td>Freshman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postbaccalaureate Undergraduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumulative Undergraduate</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Hours:</td>
<td>P/F - Pass:</td>
<td>P/F - Fail:</td>
<td>A/P:</td>
<td>CLEP:</td>
<td>OTHER:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

GPA Calculations will appear only when your application status is Processed.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Medical School</th>
<th>MCAT 10th-90th</th>
<th>CUM GPA 10th-90th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland (MD)</td>
<td>508-520</td>
<td>3.60-3.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanderbilt (TN)</td>
<td>515-524</td>
<td>3.71-4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington (DC)</td>
<td>506-518</td>
<td>3.44-3.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penn State COM (PA)</td>
<td>503-518</td>
<td>3.57-3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida State (FL)</td>
<td>499-514</td>
<td>3.48-3.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyola Chicago (IL)</td>
<td>503-518</td>
<td>3.39-3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY Upstate (NY)</td>
<td>504-520</td>
<td>3.39-3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johns Hopkins (MD)</td>
<td>514-525</td>
<td>3.78-4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drexel University (PA)</td>
<td>506-518</td>
<td>3.43-3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rush Medical College (IL)</td>
<td>505-518</td>
<td>3.44-3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Avg indebtedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VaTech</td>
<td>Roanoke, VA</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyola Chicago</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>205,460</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duke</td>
<td>Durham, NC</td>
<td>118,579</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wake Forest</td>
<td>Winston-Salem, NC</td>
<td>187,548</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hopkins</td>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tulane</td>
<td>New Orleans, LA</td>
<td>262,219</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Washington</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>201,981</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>221,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosalind Franklin</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>236,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>157,188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT ARE MEDICAL SCHOOLS LOOKING FOR?

- Sufficiently strong academic profile and MCAT
- Patient-centered exposure
- Evidence of a service orientation
- Research, academic curiosity, spirit of investigation
- Leadership, teamwork, & initiative
- Complete, representative, and strong letters of recommendation
- Evidence of an appreciation of diversity
- Strong application and personal statement!

REMEMBER, HOWEVER…

- Quality and commitment over quantity
- Interests/commitments outside of career goals
- Individuality and passion
- Self-understanding, personal insight, perspective
- WHY DO YOU WANT TO GO TO MED SCHOOL?
WHAT ARE MEDICAL SCHOOLS LOOKING FOR?
# PERSONAL COMPETENCIES

1. Integrity and Ethics
2. Reliability and Dependability
3. Resilience and adaptability
4. Capacity for improvement
5. Service Orientation
6. Social, Interpersonal and Teamwork Skills
7. Desire to Learn
8. Resilience and Adaptability
9. Cultural Competence
10. Oral Communication

**How Demonstrated?**

**Why Important?**

**What does it say about me?**

**What are medical schools looking for?**
### Mapping Desirable Physician Traits to Applicant Data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physician Trait</th>
<th>Applicant Data Elements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual ability</td>
<td>Academic record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to service</td>
<td>History of engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>Past behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Essay, letters of reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for growth</td>
<td>Adversities overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional resilience</td>
<td>Distance traveled*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of character</td>
<td>Letters of reference, testimonials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>Interview, letters of reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity and engagement</td>
<td>Life choices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*“Distance traveled” refers to cumulative life experiences — how far one has come in life, rather than physical distance.*
Figure 1. Importance of Application Data to Admission Officers at 113 Medical Schools in Their Decisions to Invite Interviewees and Offer Acceptances

### Invite Interviewees
- GPA: Cumulative science and math (3.7)
- GPA: Cumulative (3.6)
- MCAT Total scores (3.5)
- Letters of recommendation (3.4)
- Community service: medical (3.3)
- Personal statements (3.2)
- Medical/clinical work experience (3.2)
- Community service: non-medical (3.1)
- Leadership experience (3.0)
- Completion of premedical requirements (3.0)
- Experience with underserved populations (2.7)

### Offer Acceptances
- Interview recommendation (4.5)
- Letters of recommendation (3.8)
- GPA: Cumulative science and math (3.7)
- Community service: medical (3.6)
- GPA: Cumulative (3.6)
- MCAT Total scores (3.4)
- Personal statements (3.4)
- Medical/clinical work experience (3.4)
- Community service: non-medical (3.3)
- Leadership experience (3.2)
- Completion of premedical requirements (3.1)
- Experience with underserved populations (3.0)

Note. Mean importance ratings are shown in parentheses. Application data are presented in descending order of importance to admissions committees’ decisions about which applicants to interview and accept into medical school. The admissions data presented standard deviations ranging from 0.9 to 1.7, indicating variation in importance across medical schools. Data about the importance of “interview recommendations” were not collected at the “invite interviewees” stage. See supplemental material for a complete list of application data rated, mean importance ratings, and standard deviations.
THE MCAT AND MCAT PREPARATION

MCAT Scores

- About 50% science
  - Biology
  - Biochemistry
  - Gen Chemistry
  - Org
  - Physics
- About 50% not science
  - CARS
  - SocioLOGY
  - Psychology

Exam time 6h, 15m
(7h, 30m incl. breaks)

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MCAT RELATED QUESTIONS

- Issues to consider when deciding which date to choose
- What scores do med schools want? What is a good score?
- Do you need a prep course? Will you be at a disadvantage?
- Developing an MCAT study strategy
Think of each step as trains arriving from multiple tracks into a final destination. Each step has its own path or track that often runs simultaneously and parallel to another – BUT SEPARATELY.

**KEY FOR BLOOMBERG STUDENTS – APP CAN BE VERIFIED WHILE MCAT BEING SCORED**
THE MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATION CYCLE
(AND YOUR MASTERS YEAR . . .)

Term 1 (September-October)
- Transition to graduate coursework
- Selective involvements
- Establishing relationships

Term 2 (November-December)
- Hit your academic stride
- Reflection and journaling
- Timeline considerations for Spring
- Communicate with home institution

Term 3 (January-March)
- Personal statement workshops
- MCAT study plan
- Letter of recommendation strategy
- Purchase/Share MSAR

Term 4 (March-May)
- Application workshop
- Work on AMCAS application
- Researching medical schools
- Have requested letters of recommendation
- Preparing to apply (May 1, appl. opens)

Create your own timeline
THE MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATION CYCLE (SUMMER AND THE APPLICATION YEAR...)

June
- MCAT?
- Submission of AMCAS/AACOMAS
- Transcripts to AMCAS/AACOMAS
- Letters of Rec to AMCAS/AACOMAS

July
- MCAT?
- Submission of AMCAS/AACOMAS?
- Application verified
- Secondaries

August
- Continued secondaries
- Start of interview season
- Application verified

September – March/April
- Prepare/attend interviews
- Completed secondaries
- Send updates if acceptable
- Acceptances!!
- April 30th!

Create your own timeline
“Are all of these letters of recommendation from your mother?”
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- Who should I ask? (choose recommenders carefully)
- How do I ask for a recommendation?
- What materials do I give to the recommender?
- What about waiving my right to see a letter?
- How many recommendations?
- Professionalism, courtesy and appreciation!

- Check AMCAS and AACOMAS for instructions on uploading letters of rec.
- Contact your undergraduate institution’s Pre-Health or Career Services Office to inquire about services they might offer for letters of rec.
From the perspective of the writer...

“Students pursuing a master's degree at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, in addition to gaining an invaluable graduate academic background in a specialty in public health education, are exposed to research, medically-related, and community experience that often transforms their applications to medical school. Moreover, these students come to understand the relationship between medicine and public health and why public health is relevant to their medical education and future careers. As a faculty member in the Bloomberg School, you are in a unique position to emphasize these strengths in your students. Writing letters of recommendation for applicants to medical school is an important task.”
RESEARCHING MEDICAL SCHOOLS

- Location!
- How many? (average is 17)
- State residency
- Balance across selectivity (reaches, realistics, safeties)
- Tuition and Debt (2016 - $190 avg. med school debt)
- Mission and curriculum
- Size and composition of student body
- Research vs. clinical emphasis; special programs

KEY RESOURCES:
- Allopathic: Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR)
- Osteopathic: College Information Booklet (CIB)
RESEARCHING MEDICAL SCHOOLS - OSTEO
As D.O. Medical Schools Expand, Applicants Have More Choices

In a few years, D.O.-granting schools will have increased enrollment by 162 percent, one report states.

By Delece Smith-Barrow, Staff Writer | June 23, 2015, at 10:30 a.m.
OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

- 34 COM at 51 locations in 32 states
- Analogous but distinctive form of medicine
- Trained to look holistically at the whole person
- 56% chose primary care disciplines

Tenets:
1. The body is a unit; the person is a unit of body, mind, and spirit.
2. The body is capable of self-regulation, self-healing, and health maintenance.
3. Rational treatment is based upon an understanding of the basic principles of body unity, self-regulation, and the interrelationship of structure and function.

Osteopathic Medical College
Information Book, 2018-2019
OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

- Are well-rounded
- Demonstrate strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Have a record of community service
- Have a record of leadership
- Have some clinical experience
- Have participated in a variety of extracurricular activities
- Come from diverse backgrounds
- Are motivated to pursue a career in osteopathic medicine
- Possess knowledge of osteopathic medicine
- Have shadowed an osteopathic physician

2017 New MCAT
Psychological, Social, & Bio.: 126.2
Bio. & Biochemical: 126.0
Chemical & Physical: 125.7
Critical Analysis & Reasoning: 125.2

TOTAL MCAT: 503.1

2017 GPA STATS
Science: 3.43
Non-Science: 3.64
Overall GPA: 3.53

GET INFO BOOK!!
SELF-ASSESSMENT:

1. What are your strengths as an applicant and how will you best highlight in your application?

2. What are areas in need of the most improvement?

3. What aspects of your experiences, competencies, aptitudes, etc., do you want to stand out the most in your application to medical school?

4. How might you prioritize your time and investments in the coming year(s) and how you devise a plan?
UPCOMING

1. Three one-hour “Personal Statement Writing” workshops (two in 3rd term, one in 4th term)
2. “Applying to Medical School” workshop (4th term)
3. An individual one-on-one “consulting” appointment (preferably in 1st or 2nd term)

In preparation for one-on-one appointment, bring:

1. Self-evaluation
2. Unofficial transcript
3. Resume

Schedule appointment through: HANDSHAKE
JOURNALING/REFLECTING

Take time to reflect
IN SUMMARY

✓ Prioritize academics
✓ Prioritize selected commitments outside of class
✓ Explore research and/or public health
✓ Seek advice and mentorship
✓ Communicate with home institution
✓ Plan MCAT timeline and study strategy
✓ Explore the osteopathic option (shadow a DO)
✓ Consider your options
✓ Plan for fees and costs of applying
✓ Practice reflection and engage in outside reading
✓ Plan for your glide year

DEVELOP YOUR “LIFE SKILLS” // “ESTABLISH YOUR GOALS” (EVANS)
FINAL THOUGHTS AND Q&A

- Seek Balance
- Prioritize
- Reflect
- Be realistic
- Pace Yourself
- Self-Care
- Plan

QUESTIONS?
“Regarding people as having lives of equal worth means recognizing each as having a common core of humanity. Without being open to their humanity, it is impossible to provide good care to people—to insure, for instance, that you’ve given them enough anesthetic before doing a procedure. To see their humanity, you must put yourself in their shoes. That requires a willingness to ask people what it’s like in those shoes. It requires curiosity about others and the world beyond your boarding zone.”

“Once we lose the desire to understand—to be surprised, to listen and bear witness—we lose humanity. Among the most important capacities that you take with you today is your curiosity. You must guard it, for curiosity is the beginning of empathy. When others say that some is evil or crazy, or even a hero or an angel, they are usually trying to shut off curiosity. Don’t let them. We are all capable of heroic and of evil things. No one and nothing that you encounter in your life and career will be simply heroic or evil. Virtue is a capacity. It can always be lost or gained. That potential is why all of our lives are of equal worth.”