MEDICAL SCHOOL: FROM BSU TO DREAMS COME TRUE

Bethany Collins
UVM College of Medicine
Class of 2014
What is medical school?

- **Year 1** – *Normal structure and function of body tissues*
  - First semester – biochemistry, cell biology, medical genetics, gross anatomy
  - Second semester – structure and function of human organ systems, neuroscience, immunology

- **Year 2** – *Abnormal structure and function*
  - First semester – infectious diseases, pharmacology, pathology
  - Second semester – clinical diagnoses and therapeutics, health law

- **Years 3 and 4** – *The clinical years*
  - Generalist core – experience in family and community medicine, general and ambulatory care internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, surgery, research, and other interests
  - Other requirements – neurology, psychiatry, subspecialty segment (anesthesia, dermatology, orthopaedics, urology, radiology, ophthalmology, otolaryngology), continuity of care segment (sub internships, emergency room and intensive care experiences), and electives
Other Key Steps

- White Coat Ceremony, Hippocratic Oath
- USMLE – Step 1, Step 2
- Residency Applications
- Match Day
- Residency
  - Intern year, senior resident
- Fellowship
- Medical Licensure
Sample Residency Lengths

- Family medicine – 3 years
- Emergency medicine – 3 years
- General Internal Medicine – 3 years
- Pediatrics – 3 years
- Pediatric subspecialties – 5 years
- Obstetrics and gynecology – 4 years
- Pathology – 4 years
- Anesthesiology – 4 years
- Dermatology – 4 years
- Neurology – 4 years
- Ophthalmology – 4 years
- Psychiatry – 4 years
- Radiology – 4 years
- Orthopaedic surgery – 5 years
- Otolaryngology – 5 years
- Urology – 5 years
- Surgical subspecialties – 6 to 7 years
What Med Schools Expect

- Overall GPA of ~ 3.6 and up
- Science GPA lower, other classes higher
- MCAT score of approximately 30
- Extracurricular activities that show interest in medicine, empathy towards other, commitment / hard work, leadership, etc.
- Anything else “shiny” that makes you stand out as a person!
Admission Requirements (AAMC)

- Medical school admission requirements vary from school to school. In general, most medical schools will expect applicants to have taken the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), and to have completed the following types of courses:
  - One year of biology
  - One year of physics
  - One year of English
  - Two years of chemistry (through organic chemistry)

- Applicants should consider volunteering at a local hospital or clinic to gain practical experience in the health professions. A well-rounded sampling of extra-curricular activities or work experiences, both related and unrelated to medicine, will help broaden an applicant's knowledge and development.

- Students interested in medicine are encouraged to research the wide variety of jobs available in the health professions, to discuss the nature and demands of medicine with a pre-medical advisor or health professional, and to ask a lot of questions before embarking on the application process.

- Each school's specific prerequisites are detailed annually in the Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR®). The MSAR® is highly recommended to all prospective applicants and is available at most school libraries, premedical advising offices, and can be purchased from AAMC Publications.
MSAR 2013-2014

MSAR®:
Getting Started
Medical School Admission Requirements

The Most Authoritative Guide to U.S. and Canadian Medical Schools

Association of American Medical Colleges
My Timeline

- Massasoit Community College
- Transferred to BSC – Biology Major
- Picked Chemistry as 2nd Major (Honors)
- Joined the Army Reserves
- Spanish Minor
- Had lots and lots of FUN!!!
- Took a year off to work
- Applied to medical school …
- Matriculated at UVM COM
Activities

- Church Pianist
- Biology Research (Dr. Roling) BSC
- Honors Thesis Chemistry Research (Dr. Haefner) BSC
- United States Army Reservist
- Resident Assistant BSC
- Parent Association Scholarship Recipient BSC
- Alternative Winter Break International Volunteer BSC (Honduras)
- Emergency Care Center Patient Care Liaison

- Dental Service Mission Volunteer
- American Chemical Society National Meeting Poster Presenter
- Peer Tutor - BSC
- Chemistry Club President BSC
- Adrian Tinsley Program Research Grant Recipient – BSC
- Office / Warehouse Assistant
- Hospitals of Hope Intern Bolivia (through BSC internship)
How BSU Made a Difference
Size of BSU

- BSU is relatively small
- Take advantage of being able to talk to your professors, get extra help, etc.
- No going through TA’s
- Chance to build personal relationships
- Research opportunities, scholarships, travel grants, volunteering trips, are less competitive than bigger schools
Service Trips at BSU

- Winter and spring break trips available
- Requires some prior experience in empathy or evidence of interest in project
- FREE trip (more or less)
- Non-medical but still good opportunity to show empathy, etc.
- Somewhat competitive but doable!
Research

- Lots of opportunities at BSU !!!
- Looks great on your application
- Faculty have lots of projects
- Can usually work on your own idea (providing its approved)
- Chances to present at national conferences
- Can work on projects for months – or years!
- Funding available
Internship

- Set up through BSC – 3 credits
- “Choose your own adventure”
- 4 weeks at a private hospital in Bolivia
- P/F 😊
- Grading by weekly email reports, printed and PowerPoint presentation at end of internship to BSC faculty
- AWESOME on AMCAS applications!
The Process of Applying
Freshman Year

Fall Semester
- Meet prehealth advisor and investigate prehealth advisory program
- As applicable, ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations
- Successfully complete first-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements

Spring Semester
- Identify summer paid/volunteer medically related opportunities
- Successfully complete second-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

Summer
- Complete summer paid/volunteer medically related experience
- Attend summer school, if desired or necessary
Sophomore Year

**Fall Semester**
- Check in with prehealth advisor and participate in prehealth activities
- Investigate available volunteer/paid medically related clinical or research activities
- Successfully complete first-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

**Spring Semester**
- Check in with prehealth advisor and participate in prehealth activities
- Participate in paid/volunteer medically related clinical or research activities
- Identify summer paid/volunteer medically related opportunities
- Successfully complete second-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

**Summer**
- Complete summer paid/volunteer medically related experience
- Participate in a summer health careers program, if available
- Attend summer school, if desired or necessary
Junior Year

Fall Semester
- Check in with prehealth advisor and participate in prehealth activities
- Continue participation in paid/volunteer medically related activities
- Investigate:
  - Applying to Medical School
  - Medical schools in the U.S. and Canada
  - Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)
  - Fee Assistance Program (FAP)
  - Minorities in Medicine to get information for groups underrepresented in medicine
- Begin preparation and register for desired MCAT administration; visit MCAT Web site for available test dates
- Successfully complete first-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations
Junior Year

Spring Semester

- Consult regularly with prehealth advisor about:
  - Schedule for completion of school-specific requirements for advisor/committee premedical evaluation
  - Advice about medical education options
  - Continue participation in paid/volunteer medically related activities
  - Prepare for and take desired MCAT administration; visit MCAT Web site
  - Continue review of medical education options
  - Take spring MCAT

- Investigate, as applicable, the Curriculum Directory for information about medical school curricula and joint, dual, and combined-degree programs
- Successfully complete second-semester required premedical coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors' evaluations

Summer

- Participate in a summer health careers program, if available
- Complete AMCAS application
- Take desired MCAT administration
- Attend summer school, if desired or necessary
- Become familiar with:
  - Recommendations Concerning Medical School Acceptance Procedures for First-Year Entering Students
  - Applicant Responsibilities
Senior Year

**Fall Semester**
- Complete supplementary application materials for schools to which you've applied
- Consult regularly with prehealth advisor regarding:
  - Completion of school-specific requirements for advisor/committee premedical evaluation
  - Status of application/admission process for schools to which you've applied
- Continue participation in paid/volunteer medically related activities
- **Interview at medical schools**
- Continue review of medical education options
- Successfully complete first-semester elective science and non-science coursework and other degree requirements
- Ensure that prehealth advisor receives course directors’ evaluations

**Spring Semester**
- Make interim and final decisions about medical school choice
- Immediately notify medical schools that you will not be attending
- Ensure that all IRS forms are submitted as early as possible
- Successfully complete second-semester elective science and non-science coursework and other degree requirements
- Graduate
The AAMC offers practice MCAT tests comprised of previously administered questions. One test is free and you may purchase additional tests at MCAT Practice Online. The cost is $35 each.
MCAT Preparation

Is the MCAT exam changing?

Yes. The MCAT exam will be changing in the spring of 2015. The new exam, known as MCAT2015, will have four sections:

- Biological and Biochemical Foundations of Living Systems
- Chemical and Physical Foundations Biological of Living Systems
- Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior
- Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills.
Financing Medical School

Medical student debt has increased in recent years due to:

- Declining institutional grant support, increases in tuition and cost of living, and the ease with which money can be borrowed.
- As the debt burden becomes more unmanageable, fewer people may be attracted to a career in medicine.
- Most medical students borrow at least a portion of the money they need to finance their education. In 2008, the median amount of that debt was $140,000, more than $10,000 higher than 2007. High levels of debt may impact individual decisions to pursue a fellowship program, to subspecialize, or to practice in an underserved area.
Financing Medical School

- In 2010–2011, annual tuition and fees at public medical schools averaged approximately $25,000 for state residents and $48,000 for non-residents.
- At private schools, tuition and fees averaged $42,000 for residents and $43,000 for non-resident students. These figures do not include housing or living expenses.
- Federal student loans include, but are not limited to, the Stafford loan, the PLUS Loan, and the Perkins loan.
- Nonfederal alternative loan programs are also available.
Financing Medical School

- **Don’t let the costs discourage you.** A variety of loans, scholarships, and grants are available!!!
- Some are needbased, some are merit based and some require a service commitment.
- Grants and scholarships are available from the federal government and from the individual medical schools. Federal Service programs include the Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship and the National Health Service Corps.
- Scholarships for underrepresented minority students also are available through the National Medical Fellowships.
What I wish I knew ...
If I could do it again ...

- I’d ask more questions of medical students I knew!!!
- I would still take the Kaplan MCAT class (best investment if you need a lot of review!)
- I would still attend BSC
Persistence

- Don’t quit if you get waitlisted
- Write them a letter of interest
- Write them again and again and again
- Write them a letter of intent!
Fact

- You don’t need to go to a big school or private school to get into medical school
- You don’t need to be a science major (but unless you’re pretty brilliant elsewhere, it does help!)
- You don’t have to apply to every school in the country if you have a solid application