APPLYING TO HEALTH PROFESSION SCHOOLS: THE COMMITTEE LETTER PROCESS

November 13, 2015
Introducing the Board of Prehealth Advisers
Describing the competitive applicant
What is a committee letter? Who needs one?
The application process:
- Committee letter timeline and deadlines
- Preparing your primary application
- After submitting your primary application
Questions!

Note: We will refer often to our website and hope that you will as well!
Introducing the Board of Prehealth Advisers

- Nalini Easwar – Physics
- Daryl Gehman – Lazarus Center
- Dave Gorin - Chemistry
- Adam Hall – Biology
- Leslie Jaffe – Health Services
- Katie Lipp – Prehealth
- Beth Powell – Psychology
- Kevin Shea – Chemistry (sabbatical AY 15-16)
- Chris White-Ziegler – Chair, Biology
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Competitive Applicants

- Apply only when you have the strongest application
  - Assess your qualifications
- Overall and science GPAs of at least 3.3
- Above average scores on entrance exam
- Other relevant background experience (profession/school dependent)
- Complete application early!
Presentation Outline

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What is a Committee Letter?

- A 5-6 page narrative evaluation of your qualifications
- All individual recommendation letters are attached
- Information may come from your academic record; the Board’s knowledge of you as an applicant; information in your pre-application form; information from your Board interview; individual letters of recommendation
- More information
**Who Needs a Committee Letter?**

- Current students and alumnae from the classes of 2012-2015 who are applying to:
  - Allopathic Medical Schools (MD)
  - Osteopathic Medical Schools (DO)
  - Dental Schools
  - Optometry Schools
  - Podiatry Schools
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Committee Letter Timeline/Deadlines

- Review and follow the timeline on our website.
- Key pre-application dates with the Board:
  - Pre-application online form due by January 3 for alumnae ad February 16 for current students.
  - Meet with Katie and Daryl no later than April 15.
  - Participate in an interview with 1-2 other members of the Board.
    - Interviews will take place throughout the spring semester and must be completed by May 1.
    - Expect an honest discussion with feedback.
  - Send PDF of primary application to Katie as soon as it is submitted (aim for June!). Committee letter is completed within 30 days.
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Preparing your Application

- Winter/spring: Take entrance exam to have score before you apply. **No later than June.**
- Spring: Create Interfolio account, request 4-6 individual letters. **Due to Interfolio by June 1.**
- Spring: Research your list of schools.
- April: Request transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended.
- May: Prepare primary application. **Aim for June submission!**
Entrance Exams

- Must know scores before you apply, and to be eligible for committee letter. Must take no later than June.
- Allow adequate time for preparation
- Release scores to Smith
- Submit primary application only after you know your scores and have spoken with Katie
Letters of Recommendation

- Create Interfolio account using the link provided through pre-application
- You will request 4-6 letters; discuss with Katie
- Request at least one month before June 1
- Provide resume, personal statement and Letter to Recommenders
- Send official request through Interfolio
- Letters should be confidential
- You are responsible for following up
Selecting Schools

- Consult paper and online resources, web pages, etc.
- Consider differences: public/private, tuition, geography, curriculum, your goals and interests
- Apply to your state school
- Select a range of competitiveness
- Typically submit 12-15 applications
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After Submitting the Primary

**Summer:**
- Send PDF of primary application to Katie as soon as it is submitted (aim for June!). Committee letter is completed within 30 days if all materials are in.
- Complete **secondary applications** within 2-3 weeks.
- Prepare for interviews; schedule practice with Daryl.

**Fall/Winter:**
- Interviews!
- Follow up with schools appropriately
- Research and apply for **funding**

**Spring:**
- Select the school that is the best fit, and enroll!
Secondary Applications

- Specific to each school
- Additional information beyond primary
- Additional essays
- Complete thoughtfully
- Return promptly (2-3 weeks)
- Note: Not every school sends secondary applications, and some send them to all applicants.
Preparing for Interviews

- **Practice, practice, practice**
  - Schedule a mock interview with Daryl
  - Practice with others
  - Know your interview format
  - See sample questions

- **Plan professional attire**

- **On interview day:**
  - Be early, formal, friendly
  - You are always “on.” Your phone should always be off.

- Follow up appropriately
Paying for Professional School

- Limited scholarships/grants
- Many different loan programs
- Private schools: higher tuition, greater financial resources
- Free tuition/tuition forgiveness: Armed Services, National Health Service Corps, State Programs
- Your credit score is critical
- International students: special hurdles
DON’T FORGET!!!

☐ Apply early!
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Questions?

- Recording of this presentation available online
- Stay in touch!
  - Website: http://www.smith.edu/prehealth
  - Mailing list: http://div3lists.smith.edu/mailman/listinfo/prehealth
  - Email: klipp@smith.edu, dgehman@smith.edu