Interviewing with HCEC and the Interviewer’s Perspective

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Agenda

• HCEC Interview: Why, Who, What
• Interview and Letter Logistics
• HCEC Interview
  – Type
  – Process
  – Structure
  – Preparation
  – Resources
• Medical School Interview Preview
HCEC: Why

• Prepare a letter of evaluation
  – Summarizes your record and provides context
  – Conveys your strengths as an applicant
• Provide practice for your medical school interviews
HCEC: Who

• Cornell faculty and senior staff
  – Current faculty from a variety of disciplines
  – Emeritus professors
  – Research associates
  – Student services staff members
  – Gannett clinicians
  – Librarians
HCEC: What

• Assessment of your thinking style
  – Are you a critical thinker?
  – Can you analyze and synthesize information?
  – How do you think about things (more than what you think or how much you know)?

• Assessment of your preparedness for a career as a physician or physician/scientist: why are you right for the study of medicine?
Interview Logistics

• “Informed” interview
  – Interviewer has material you’ve submitted to HCEC: BIF, personal statement, letters of recommendation, transcripts

• Interviewer matching
  – Look for interviewer assignment in your HCEC Checklist
  – Assignments made in “batches”
  – Follow up with interviewer to schedule (be persistent but not a pest); let HCEC know at hcec@cornell.edu if you can’t arrange

• Will last ½ to 1½ hours
Letter Logistics

• Interviewer drafts letter
• HCEC receives a draft and reviews/edits if necessary
• HCEC Letter of Evaluation
  – Letter of Evaluation plus three letters of recommendation uploaded to Interfolio after you’ve notified HCEC that you’ve “processed” through AMCAS
  – You will authorize distribution through Interfolio
HCEC Interview Structure: General Guidelines

- **Greeting**
  - Make a good first impression!

- **Icebreaker/Small Talk**
  - Casual remarks to relax you.

- **Information Seeking**
  - How did you choose your major?
  - How did you get involved in an activity?
HCEC Interview Structure: General Guidelines

• Professional Discussion
  – Testing your thinking style:
    • How would you solve the problem of binge drinking by college students?
    • Why did you choose ____ activity?
    • What is the most important feature of the Affordable Health Care Act? Are you in favor of it, or against?
HCEC Interview Structure: General Guidelines

• Professional Discussion (continued)
  – Probing your commitment to the field of medicine:
    • Why do you want to be a doctor? When did you decide on this career goal?
    • What makes you think you’d be a good doctor?
    • What has been the most important challenge to your resolve to become a doctor?
HCEC Interview Structure: General Guidelines

• Professional Discussion (continued)
  – Assessing your handling of an ethical or controversial topic:
    • What would you do if you discovered a fellow doctor or resident using drugs?
    • What would you do if a patient asked to be prescribed an advertised drug that you don’t think s/he needs?
    • Do you think all patients should have access to abortion services? Or end-of-life assistance?
HCEC Interview Structure: General Guidelines

• Closure: interviewer will signal
  – Ask for feedback on specific areas to improve
  – Ask if you may call or send any additional information (if pertinent)
After the Interview

• Self analysis
  – Think about questions that were particularly difficult: how can you improve?

• Send interviewer a thank-you note
  – Interviewer is volunteering his/her time!

• Pay it forward
  – Send update about a year out, about your outcome
Prepare for the Interview

• Think carefully about the Core Competencies
• Review the materials you have prepared for HCEC
• Consider how you would answer questions about:
  – Your personal interests, characteristics, motivation
  – How your education has prepared you
  – How you demonstrate your interest in becoming a doctor
  – Your knowledge of issues in the health-care field: policy, ethics, current events
  – How you have gained insight or personal growth from different experiences

• PRACTICE!
Interview Tips

• Think about your body language
• Maintain good eye contact
• Use firm, controlled speech; work on not ending sentences with question mark
• Take time to think about your answers
• Answers should not be less than 20 seconds or more than 2 minutes long
Interview Tips

• Re-state complex or long questions to be sure you have understood them or ask the interviewer to repeat if you’re not sure
• It’s OK to say “I’m not sure”
• Keep your Facebook page clean
A Note on Strengths and Weaknesses

• **Strengths**
  – Be direct: this is not the time for excessive modesty
  – If it is true, it’s not bragging to admit it

• **Weaknesses**
  – Interviewer will assume you have some, particularly ones due to inexperience
    • Demonstrate self-insight/self-appraisal
    • Speak about what you are doing to address or compensate for them
Resources

- Career Guide chapter
- Applicant Guide chapter (forthcoming)
- Career Library
- Optimal Interview
- Health Careers web page on medical issues
- Newspapers/magazines
- Journals
- Blogs
Medical School Interviews: A Preview

• Three popular types of interviews
  – Subjective
    • Usually two interviews, one with a doctor or staff member, one with a student
  – Structured
    • One interviewer per candidate, with same questions asked that other interviewers are asking their applicants (for “holistic review”)
  – Multiple Mini Interview
    • 6-10 questions asked of all candidates, with an interviewer asking all candidates the same question and candidates moving from interviewer to interviewer
Upcoming Programs

- **All About the MCAT**
  - Friday, February 28, 4:45 p.m., 142 Goldwin Smith

- **How to Choose Your List of Schools**
  - Wednesday, April 9, 4:45 p.m., KAU Auditorium, Goldwin Smith

- **All About Health Career Related Summer Activities**
  - Friday, April 18, 4:45 p.m., KAU Auditorium, Goldwin Smith
Upcoming Programs

• HCEC Spring Briefings
  – Wednesday, April 23, 4:35 p.m., TBD
  – Monday, April 28, 6:00 p.m., TBD
  – Tuesday, May 6, 1:00 p.m., TBD

• Writing Personal Statements and Themes for Applications
  – Thursday, April 24, 4:45 p.m., KAU Auditorium, Goldwin Smith

• Completing AMCAS and Other Applications
  – Wednesday, April 30, 4:45 p.m., KAU Auditorium, Goldwin Smith
Questions?