Increasing Your Chances of Admission with a Gap Year

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What is a “gap year”? 

- **Gap**
  - A break or hole in an object or between two objects
  - An unfilled space or interval
  - A break in continuity

- The definitions of what an effective “gap year” is **NOT**

- Effective gap years show continuity between undergraduate and advanced study, and present a better prepared, more mature applicant

“Things work out best for those who make the best of how things work out.”

*John Wooden*
Why a Gap Year?

• Improve your credentials
  – Gain additional experience
  – Improve grades (senior year or through post-bac program)
  – Fill in any “gaps”
  – Develop relationships with potential LoR writers

• Take a break: live a dream

• Give yourself more time to manage the medical school application process

• Confirm your interest
Why Not a Gap Year?

• Readiness to go on to medical school
  – If you are ready now, schools may question decision, especially if time is not spent wisely.
  – See “Applying to Med School: Are You Ready Now?”

• Uncertainty about being able to find the ideal experience
  – You don’t want this to leave an actual gap in your credentials

• Concern about how it will look to medical schools

• Parental (or other external) pressure to proceed directly into medical school
Success Factors for Admission

• Academic Credentials
  – Cornell GPA (overall and BCMP)
  – Standardized test scores (MCAT or DAT)
  – “Comfort level”
    • Science GPA above 3.4; MCAT score above 32; no individual score below 9

• Non-Academic Experiences
  – Service to others
  – Exposure/experience in the world of clinical healthcare
  – Ability to communicate well interpersonally
  – Interactions with others different from yourself
Core Competencies

- **Interpersonal**
  - Service Orientation
  - Social Skills
  - Cultural Competence
  - Teamwork
  - Oral Communication

- **Intrapersonal**
  - Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others
  - Reliability and Dependability
  - Resilience and Adaptability
  - Capacity for Improvement
Core Competencies

- **Thinking and Reasoning**
  - Critical Thinking
  - Quantitative Reasoning
  - Scientific Inquiry
  - Written Communication

- **Science**
  - Living Systems
  - Human Behavior
2011-2013 admission to schools of allopathic (M.D.) medicine of Cornell University first-time, non-underrepresented in medicine applicants using the HCEC.
## Acceptance Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th>Seniors (1 gap year)</th>
<th>Alumni (2+ gap years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.6-3.19</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>3/22</td>
<td>18/81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2-3.59</td>
<td>55/120</td>
<td>61/122</td>
<td>87/162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6-4.0</td>
<td>245/296</td>
<td>101/123</td>
<td>89/110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Juniors**
  - 4/20 applicants and none with GPA under 2.8; 55/120 acceptances with GPA under 3.0

- **Seniors (1 gap year)**
  - 3/22 applicants and 14% acceptance with GPA under 3.0

- **Alumni (2+ gap years)**
  - 18/81 applicants and 22% acceptance with GPA under 3.0

- **Seniors or Alumni**
  - 7 acceptances with GPA under 3.0
Self Reflection

• Consider your readiness
  – Applications undergo holistic review
  – Application must be strong as a whole

• Identify any gaps
  – Common weakness areas:
    • Experience – little to no clinical exposure
    • LoR – developed relationships, holistic picture of applicant

• Explore options
• Make a plan
Resources for Planning a Gap Year

- Rita Townend-Boratav (103 Barnes Hall; rct5)

- CCS Library:
  - “Gap year” key-word search returns 129 resources (books, websites, etc.) across Career Services offices, mostly in 103 Barnes or G55 Goldwin Smith

- Link Library:
  - Gap or “Bridge” Year
  - Health Careers
Options

• Medical schools know that you need to support yourself during your gap year

• Level of support from others will influence your choices
  – Paid position
    • Related to medicine is a plus
    • Service to others
  – Unpaid positions
    • Volunteering at hospitals, clinics, etc.

• Need to address any weaknesses in your application
A New Opportunity

- Kuchnir Dermatology
  - Patient Care Coordinator
  - Work with Dr. Louis Kuchnir in his practice
  - Info session – February 3rd, location TBA
  - Full description on ccNET
Questions?

“Action is the foundational key to all success.”

Pablo Picasso