Outline of today's meeting:

PART I – TABLES CONTAIN ADMISSIONS DATA FROM THE PAST FEW YEARS

I. Summarize tables. What is a competitive applicant? How admissions committees work?

Note: In many cases, average GPA is often misleading because only HC grades are reported. Students often take additional courses, and perform well above 3.5 on these courses. They are not figured into the HC GPA. It is important to note that medical schools admissions committees sometimes also do not add these courses into GPA either, though they will be included in GPAs computed by AMCAS and AACOMAS (the allopathic and osteopathic application services). It is important to note that HC has less grade inflation than other schools; for this reason, we report class rank (so it is easy to see what a 3.0 is relative to others at HC. I would consider applying to a school with a somewhat higher GPA reported in MSAR (but don’t go overboard here – a 3.0 grade point average at HC does not translate to a 3.5 at other schools). In addition, medical school admissions committees will look at the trend of grades over time as well as grades earned in individual classes. A weak grade in an early science course can be addressed by demonstrating excellence in a later related elective.

a. Reality check

National numbers up for allopathic, osteopathic, and other allied health schools:

This year, HISTORICAL HIGH OF MORE THAN 50,000 APPS TO ALLOPATHIC; up 33% over the past 7 years.

Approximately 8000 applications to a typical private medical school (e.g., I would bet Tufts had more than 11,000 this year); 600-700 interviews, 300 or so accepted, 140 or so enrolled.

Osteopathic medical schools show similar increase: up to high of 18,000 this past year (an increase of nearly 50% over the past five years, nearly 100% over the last decade!!). The typical osteopathic medical school, e.g., CCOM, gets approx. 57000 applications, interviews 650, for a class of approx. 200. Slightly easier to get into a private osteopathic medical school than a private allopathic medical school.

Students apply to 24 schools, approx. 43% gain acceptance to at least one school.

Average age of first year medical student, 24 years.

b. Main factors – haven’t changed in many years

(1) Quantitative characteristics: Overall and Science GPA (BCPM); MCAT (but it is a new MCAT, obviously, so it will likely be less emphasized relative to years past).

(2) Non-quantitative characteristics: evidence of character, maturity, commitment, etc – look at letters of recommendation, committee rating, clinically relevant experience

(3) Interview
Obviously non-quantitative characteristics are also judged in the interview, but the medical admissions process is a two-stage process. They judge quantitative and non-quantitative characteristics on paper, and then bring you in for the interview.

II. You should know that schools screen applicants differently: Washington University in St. Louis bases screen primarily on quantitative; Rochester and Dartmouth on a mix of quantitative and non-quantitative. Schools with whom we do a lot of “business” consider our applicants carefully, e.g., Loyola and Creighton read everything on every HC applicant (unless you don’t really have the “stuff” at all).

What constitutes reasonable “numbers” and other qualifications at a top-40 USNEWS “research” school vs. a top-40 “primary care” school? At your state school? At a DO vs. an MD school? You should start thinking about this carefully and use available materials to help you. MSAR, USNEWS rankings, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (e.g., “The Social Mission of Medical Education: Ranking the Schools”), etc.

If applying to medical school, I would start reading M.D. and D.O. articles in the top medical journals. My “top-5” in order for an applicant: *NEJM* (all sorts of articles), *Annals of Internal Medicine* (“On Being a Doctor” articles such as “In defense of the personal statement”, 11/15/12), *Academic Medicine* (AAMC’S journal, e.g., 6/09 issue on osteopathic medicine), *JAMA* (AMA’s flagship journal), *Lancet* (British equivalent of the *NEJM*, great for international medicine). Read the NYTimes and WSJ science sections regularly (Tuesdays in the NYTimes, different days in the WSJ, usually something on the weekend, Saturday, issue).

PART II – ARE YOU READY TO APPLY THIS YEAR?

I. Evaluate yourself honestly… I urge you to be realistic in assessing your chances of being taken seriously as an applicant this year. If you are not strong “numerically”, this may not be your year to apply. In the present competitive environment, small weaknesses in an application readily lead to a student being screened out or rejected by a medical school admissions committee.

Do you have all the information you need to judge your application? Have your already received your MCAT scores for example?

How do your quantitative data “stack up”?

Do you have appropriate non-quantitative characteristics? Do you have the necessary “seasoning”? How will you do if a practicing pediatrician or family doctor interviews you? You need good medical experience in some sort of “clinical” setting so you can tell your interviewer you want to be a physician out of your experiences. What counts as a “clinical” setting? Good question. We talk about your ability pass the “gurney test”; what kinds of experience helps you to do so?

**NOTE:** There is no learning experience to applying too early; you can be “hurt” by applying too early.

II. Where should I apply?

*Allopathic* – Research vs. primary care schools; state vs. private schools; Jesuit and Catholic schools; *NECOME* schools; Big vs. small schools (class size).
You should do some research on schools.

Use the **Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR)** obtainable at [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org) (approx. $25).

You should browse the [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org) website more generally as it is a good source of information about allopathic medical schools and has some essential information, e.g., [http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/start.htm](http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/start.htm) (home page for applicants on aamc website).

**Osteopathic** – More holistic/nonreductive; less research oriented; not necessarily based at a university medical center; more popular in the Midwest.

The osteopathic schools web site [www.aacom.org](http://www.aacom.org) is good for information about DO schools and osteopathy more generally. DO schools publish a comparable, if smaller book to the **MSAR**, *Osteopathic Medical College Information Book* (DO schools are increasing but still many fewer in number than MD schools).

A good book on osteopathy as opposed to allopathic medicine is by Norman Gevitz, *The D.O.'s* (Johns Hopkins Press). As I said, *Academic Medicine* (June 2009 issue) includes several important review articles on osteopathy.

III. The "nuts and bolts" of applying:

**APPLICATION TO MEDICAL SCHOOL IS "ROLLING".** AAMCAS AND AACOMAS APPS CAN BE SUBMITTED ONLINE AS EARLY AS JUNE 3rd. THE APPLICATION WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE (IF IT IS NOT ALREADY AVAILABLE), BUT THERE IS A INSTRUCTION BOOKLET THAT WILL PERMIT YOU TO START THINKING ABOUT YOUR APPLICATION AND OTHER RESOURCES AT [http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/start.htm](http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/start.htm).

You should try to complete the application to AMCAS or AACOMAS AS SOON AFTER JUNE 3rd AS POSSIBLE. Call the AMCAS (202-828-0600) or AACOMAS (301-968-4190) office if an application acknowledgement is not obtained.

Expect to receive a supplementary application, a request for letters of recommendation and a processing fee from medical schools, shortly after receiving the transmittal notification. Supplementary materials can be time consuming to fill out, but should be returned promptly. The applicant's file will not be complete until they are received. Some medical schools have deadlines for submitting secondary materials, so read the material carefully. **Virtually all will tell you to apply early.**

What is “early”? I would say that anything before July 15 is probably ok, but mid-June is a better time to send out primary applications to AAMCAS, AADSAS, etc. than mid-July. Several schools start to interview in August, a handful as early as the end of July (e.g., Pitt, Case, etc.), so the earlier the better.

Carefully follow the instructions provided to you about the materials and procedures you need to follow to request a committee letter. This information is also on the health professions website under Key Documents.
OUR LETTERS ARE SENT OUT LATER IN THE SUMMER; NONE ARE SENT BEFORE THE FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST. This will match the time you should be getting your secondaries back to medical schools, and be entirely appropriate for schools with even the most accelerated “rolling” admissions.

NOTE: Please don’t bug me or Mickie or anyone on the HPAC about your letters. We don’t respond well to being bugged about letters. We are all working “full tilt” in the summer on writing letters. Many letters need to be written and edited, they each take considerable time, and we do them sequentially roughly in the order we receive notice from you that you are applying and that you have completed your primary application to amcas, aadsas, etc.

For your info, I will be on campus much of the summer. I can be reached by calling Mickie Casello at x2533 or via email. Miles Cahill will also be around much of the summer and will respond if I am not available. When in doubt about something, don’t assume, email questions or call.

THIS YEAR AND THE NEW MCAT WILL LIKELY INFLUENCE THE WAY THE APPLICATION SEASON PROGRESSES. NOT SURE HOW, BUT IT WILL INFLUENCE THINGS...
### TIMELINE FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

| FIRST WEEK IN MAY | **AAMCAS, AADSAS, AACOMAS APPLICATION AVAILABLE ON LINE...STUDENTS CAN START COMPLETING THE APPLICATION.** |
| JUNE 1ST         | **AAMCAS AND AACOMAS START ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS. LET YOUR ADVISOR KNOW IF YOU ARE (OR ARE NOT) APPLYING SO SHE OR HE CAN START ON YOUR LETTER. WE DO NOT ASSUME YOU'RE APPLYING UNTIL WE HEAR FROM YOU. IF YOU LET US KNOW LATE, OTHERS WILL BE AHEAD OF YOU.** |
|                  | **AAMCAS, AADSAS, AACOMAS VERIFY AND TRANSMIT PRIMARY APPLICATION TO SCHOOLS...CHECK ON TRANSMITTAL STATUS UNTIL CONFIRMED.** |
| 2 WEEKS TO 4 WEEKS | **AFTER RECEIVING PRIMARY APPLICATION, SECONDARIES ARE SENT TO STUDENTS FROM THE MEDICAL SCHOOLS (IF DELAYED, CHECK WITH SCHOOLS, SOMETHING MIGHT BE WRONG).** |

lesen carefully the instructions for how to apply to medical school and dental school (and any other health professional school) on the web -

**http://academics.holycross.edu/healthprofessions/application_instructions#med**

With so many people applying to so many different schools, you are responsible for following these instructions to the letter.

| FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST | **FIRST LETTERS SENT …AS I SAID, DON’T HARASS US ABOUT LETTERS... WE SEND LETTERS OUT ROUGHLY IN THE ORDER THE LIST AND ENVELOPES ARE RECEIVED AND WE WILL NOT RELEASE ANY LETTERS PRIOR TO THE FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST. WE NEED A SOME TIME TO WRITE AND EDIT THEM! NO LIST AND ENVELOPES, NO LETTERS SENT.** |
| SEPT – MAY           | **INTERVIEWS AT MED SCHOOLS. FIRST INTERVIEWS IN AUGUST AT A FEW SCHOOLS, MOST BEGIN IN EARNEST IN SEPTEMBER. ACCEPTANCES TYPICALLY FIRST SENT IN NOVEMBER…BUT CONTINUE THROUGH THE SPRING** |
SOME OTHER RANDOM POINTS:

BEST TO GET MCAT AND DAT SCORES BACK BEFORE YOU APPLY ... NOT GOOD IDEA TO APPLY “BLIND” FOR MANY REASONS.
ALTERNATIVELY, IF YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR SCORES, YOU CAN APPLY TO A SMALL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS TO HAVE YOUR
APPLICATION PROCESSED BY AAMCAS AND AACOMAS, AND THEN ADD SCHOOLS AFTER YOU GET YOUR MCATS BACK. AS I
SAY, THIS YEAR’S ROLLOUT THE NEW MCAT WILL LIKELY INFLUENCE THE WAY APPLICATIONS ARE PROCESSED, E.G., IF YOU
ALREADY HAVE YOUR OLDER MCAT, THEN APPLYING EARLIER MAY WELL HELP YOU EVEN MORE THIS YEAR THAN IN YEARS
PAST.

“INSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS” AND “BACKGROUND CHECKS” ARE DONE AFTER ACCEPTANCE AT ALL SCHOOLS. SO “BE GOOD”
– DON’T DO ANYTHING STUPID. MED SCHOOLS CAN RESCIND YOUR ACCEPTANCE IF YOU DO SOMETHING ILLEGAL OR
STRIKINGLY INAPPROPRIATE.

DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING ... YOU SHOULD CHECK UP ON AAMCAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS AS THEY SOMETIMES SCREW THINGS
UP.

TYPICAL COST OF APPLYING TO 20 MED SCHOOLS WITHOUT INTERVIEWS (E.G., AAMCAS + SECONDARIES): $2000-2500; WITH 4-
5 INTERVIEWS (HOPEFULLY) $4000 AT LEAST.

ONCE AGAIN....THERE IS NO LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN APPLYING TOO EARLY AND NOT GETTING IN. MED SCHOOLS DO NOT
PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND YOU WILL NOT KNOW WHY THEY REJECTED YOU. IF YOU APPLY TO THE SAME SCHOOL THE
FOLLOWING YEAR, THEREFORE, YOU WILL NOT NECESSARILY KNOW IF YOU DEALT WITH THE ISSUE THAT PROMPTED THEIR
REJECTION. ALSO YOU WILL BE A “REAPPLICANT”...AT MANY SCHOOLS, THIS IS NOT GOOD.

ENCLOSURES: TABLES OF HOLY CROSS APPLICANTS 2009-2014