UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Personal Statements, Selecting Schools, Secondary Applications

June 6, 2023
2:15 - 4:15 pm
NEWSLETTER SIGN UP

Just scan and we'll add your email to our mailing list!
AGENDA

I. Introduction of Staff

II. 2:15 - 3:00 p.m. / Personal Statements
   - Special guest: Kerry-Ann Stewart, PhD, UConn Health
   - Questions from our staff
   - Audience questions--chat box or unmute

III. 3:00 - 3:45 p.m. / Selecting Schools

IV. 3:45 - 4:15 p.m. / Secondary Applications
GET TO KNOW US!

PPA Full-Time Professional Staff

Sarah Scheidel, Ed.D.
Director, Pre-Professional Advising

Krista Rogers, MA
Assistant Director, Pre-Professional Advising

Christina Gray, MA
Pre-Professional Advisor

Megan Baro, MS
Health Professions Advisor
GET TO KNOW US!

Part-Time Faculty/Professional Advisors & Admin Support

Thomas Abbott, PhD
Pre-Dental Advisor

Emma Belliveau, BS
Pre-Medical Advisor

Keat Sanford, PhD
Pre-Medical Advisor

Susan Ruggiero, MS
Program Assistant

Tanya Miller, BS
Social Media Coordinator

Emily Strickland,
Student Admin Assistant
GET TO KNOW US!

HPPA Team (Recently Graduated!)

Yulianny De Los Santos '23, MCB major, pre-medical track
Nour Al Zouabi '23, MCB + "Rights, Health, and Refugees" major, pre-medical track
Qristine Owusu '23, psychological sciences major, pre-dental track
Aesha Acevedo '23, MCB major, pre-medical track
GET TO KNOW YOU!

2024 Application Cycle Update

- 243 HPAPs submitted
  - 199 medical
  - 43 dental
  - 1 optometry

- Please try to submit HPAPs ASAP

- Please keep us updated
AMCAS (MD/Allopathic Medicine) “Personal Comments Essay”

- Use the Personal Comments Essay as an opportunity to distinguish yourself from other applicants. Consider and write your Personal Comments Essay carefully; many admissions committees place significant weight on the essay. Here are some questions that you may want to consider while writing the essay:
  - Why have you selected the field of medicine?
  - What motivates you to learn more about medicine?
  - What do you want medical schools to know about you that hasn’t been disclosed in other sections of the application?
PERSONAL STATEMENTS

AMCAS (MD/Allopathic Medicine) “Personal Comments Essay”

• In addition, you may wish to include information such as:
• Unique hardships, challenges, or obstacles that may have influenced your educational pursuits
• Comments on significant fluctuations in your academic record that are not explained elsewhere in your application

My personal statement staring at me while I try to relax over the weekend:
This section is where you can write a statement, which is shared with all your osteopathic medicine schools.

Once submitted, may not go back and edit.

Keep your topic general: This essay is sent to all programs where you apply.

Even if you plan to only apply to one program, it is still strongly recommended to keep the statement general in case you later apply to additional programs.
PERSONAL STATEMENTS

AADSAS (Dental Medicine)

“Personal Statement"

- Explain a defining moment that helped steer you toward a career in dentistry. Consider using that moment as the focal point of your essay.
- Be colorful, positive, imaginative and personal when discussing why you’re a good candidate for dental school. Ask yourself—in a pile of 100 applications, would I enjoy reading my statement? Be sure to convey your passion for dentistry in your statement.
- Be yourself. Don’t use jargon, clichés or big phrases that you would not use in daily conversation. Remember, dental schools want to know about the real you.
- Be original and thoughtful: Discuss how you would contribute to the profession and patient care, all of which will help you stand out from other applicants.
- Tell your story—make sure the essay is your story, not someone else’s.
- Recruit a friend. Ask a friend, relative or faculty advisor to read your essay and provide constructive criticism. Ask them to think about whether the essay is a good representation of your character, and what they know of your ideals and aspirations.
- Give yourself time to organize your thoughts, write well and edit as necessary. And don’t forget to proofread, proofread, proofread!
PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Format and Grammar

Pay attention to specific instructions:

- AMCAS: 5,300 characters—including spaces
- AACOMAS: 5,300 characters—including spaces
- AADSAS: 4,500 characters—including spaces
- Use well developed sentences, varying the length to avoid choppiness or run-on thoughts and ideas
- Catch typos, spelling, punctuation errors
PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Format and Grammar

This sentence has five words.
Here are five more words. Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It’s like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety.

Now listen.
I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length.

And sometimes, when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals– sounds that say listen to this, it is important.
PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Format and Grammar

- 4-7 drafts and revisions are typical
- Sometimes start over – new version
- Helpful to start early
- Proofing – by others and yourself
  - Clinical/medical professionals
  - People who know good writing
  - Family and friends
PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Content

- UConn Pre-Medical and Pre-Dental Advising Office Personal Statement page

  Key points to discuss

  - Personal qualities—key strengths in the core competencies
  - Preparation—what experiences have you learned from along the way
  - Motivation—preparation and desire for pursuing medicine
  - Vision—impact you wish to make in the field and your goals

- Focus on the patient
- Who you are as a person; core values
- Future vision for yourself as a practitioner
PERSONAL STATEMENTS

UConn resources

- https://career.uconn.edu/meet-with-a-career-coach/
- https://writingcenter.uconn.edu/ (reopened June 5)
PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Kerry-Ann Stewart, PhD

- UConn Health
- Assistant Professor / Basic Sciences
- Assistant Director, Office of Health Career Opportunity Programs (HCOP)
Factors for Consideration

- **Know Thyself**
  - Career Goals
  - Skills, experiences, preferences
  - Your most inspiring and rewarding activities, experiences and aspirations
SELECTING SCHOOLS

Factors for Consideration

• Location & Geography
  ○ In-state vs. Out-of-state
  ○ Public vs. Private
  ○ Urban, suburban, rural
  ○ East coast vs. west coast
SELECTING SCHOOLS

Factors for Consideration

• School Mission Statement
  ○ Does the statement match your interests?
    ▪ Research
    ▪ Clinical practice
    ▪ Teaching
    ▪ Leadership
    ▪ Technological progress
    ▪ Global health initiatives
    ▪ Service to underserved communities
SELECTING SCHOOLS

Factors for Consideration

• Reputation
  ◦ How important is the school's reputation, prestige and history to you?
  ◦ What is the school most known for?
  ◦ How does the school promote and position itself?
Factors for Consideration

- Special Program Goals
  - Primary care incentive track
  - Rural/underserved
  - Cutting-edge technological innovation
  - Research
  - Administration
  - Teaching
  - Community-based education
SELECTING SCHOOLS

Factors for Consideration

• Academics
  ○ Teaching Techniques
  ○ Typical weekly schedule
  ○ Regular curriculum
  ○ Electives
  ○ Faculty advising/mentorship
  ○ Clinical site training
  ○ Specialty hospitals
  ○ Status of residency programs
Factors for Consideration

- Competitiveness
  - Number of applicants
  - Holistic Admissions
    - Academic metrics
      - MD
      - DO
      - Dental
    - Experiential components
    - Core competencies

Matriculation Data for First Year Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>In-state</th>
<th>Out-of-state</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>464</td>
<td>3149</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>4028</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewed</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>36</td>
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The table below displays the acceptance rates at different MCAT and GPA levels for applicants and accepted applicants from 2020-2021 through 2022-2023. The frequencies are combined totals of three years. Please email datarequest@aamc.org if you need further assistance or have additional inquiries.

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<thead>
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<th>Total GPA Rate for Applicants</th>
<th>Total MCAT Scores</th>
<th>All Applicants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Greater than 3.79</td>
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<td>3.60-3.79</td>
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<td>Acceptees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance rate %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicants</td>
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<td>Acceptance rate %</td>
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<td>Less than 2.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Applicants</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicants</td>
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<td>13,522</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance rate %</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>41.2</td>
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</table>

Note: The table includes data from 2020-2021 through 2022-2023.
Applying to Medical School
AMCAS® Application Cycle Numbers for 2022 Matriculated Applicants

AMCAS OPERATIONS
- Staff spent **21,945 hours** verifying **35,738,092** application data points.

DOCUMENTS PROCESSED
- 155,898 transcripts
- 209,377 letters of evaluation

AAMC SERVICES CONTACT CENTER
- SCC staff answered:
  - 17,655 emails
  - 35,005 calls
  - That’s **290,857 minutes** on the phone.

APPLICANTS AND ENROLLEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicants</td>
<td>49,324</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>22,127</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>20,823</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average GPA</td>
<td>3.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average GPA</td>
<td>3.75</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

APPLICANTS
- Men: 22,826
- Women: 29,956

ENROLLEES
- Men: 9,163
- Women: 11,628

Youngest enrollee: 17
Oldest enrollee: 53

WHO ENROLLED?

- 2,528 AAMC Fee Assistance Program awardees
- 3,716 Number who identified as disadvantaged
- 51 Enrollees with DACA status
- 5,091 Enrollees who received a Pell Grant before medical school

SELF-IDENTIFICATION

- White 42.3%
- Asian 24.7%
- Multiple Race/Ethnicity 11.9%
- Black or African American 8.2%
- Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish Origin 6.4%
- 2.8% Unknown Race/Ethnicity
- 2.2% Other Race/Ethnicity
- 0.2% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 1.4% Non-U.S. Citizen and Nonpermanent Resident

MCAT® SCORES

- Low: 475
- Average: 509
- High: 528

- 55 Average number of courses taken
- 1,360.7 Average number of research lab hours
- 445.2 Average community service hours

*Based on AAMC applicant matriculant data file; includes data from AAMC member medical schools that do not participate in AMCAS.
SELECTING SCHOOLS

UConn SOM

Premedical Experience

Premedical Experiences of First Year Class

Legend
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
SELECTING SCHOOLS

Tufts University SOM

Commitment to primary care
TUSM has a number of programs focusing on primary care including: Primary Care Selectives; the Competency Based Apprenticeship in Primary Care; six-week core clerkships in Primary Care; and advanced rotations and Acting Internships in Primary Care. We have also established the Maine Track program which provides training in Primary Care and rural medicine in the state of Maine.

Instruction style
Our faculty educates through small-group lectures, problem- and case-based learning, research projects, computerized instruction, and one-on-one clinical teaching.
Factors for Consideration

- Key Points
  - Does the mission match your goals?
  - Do the teaching methods match your preferred learning style?
  - Access key sites for data
    - Individual school websites
    - Application service explorers
SELECTING SCHOOLS

Resources

- **MD**: Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR)
  - 23 MSAR Free Reports
- **DO**: Choose DO Explorer
- **Dental**: ADEA Explorer
- **2020-2022 Cycles UConn Applicant Data**
  - [https://premed.uconn.edu/data/](https://premed.uconn.edu/data/)
Bracketology

- Kate Fukawa-Connelly, Director of Health Professions Advising at Princeton University
- A self-reflective exercise designed to make you consider which factors are most important to you as an applicant
SCHOOL SELECTION BRACKETOLOGY

Created by Kate Fukawa-Connelly for the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP) 2023.
SCHOOL SELECTION BRACKETOLOGY

1. Residency Placement
2. Personal Connections to the school
3. Early clinical exposure
4. Leadership opportunities
5. Mentorship
6. Weather/Climate
7. Mission Statement
8. Patient populations of interest
9. Affinity group support
10. Primary care opportunities
11. Peer proximity
12. Class demographics
13. Student voice in decision making
14. Service opportunities
15. Support for specialty of interest
16. Geography/location

17. Family/partner proximity
18. Class size
19. Reputation of school
20. Extracurriculars of interest
21. Student “vibe”
22. Teaching methods/curriculum
23. Systems of evaluation
24. Wellness focus
25. Areas of concentration/tracks
26. Commitment to diversity
27. Variety in clerkship opps
28. Cost of attendance/finances
29. Academic support
30. Research opportunities
31. GPA/MCAT of class
32. Quality of facilities

Semifinal 1

Semifinal 2

FINAL GAME

WINNER

Created by Kate Fukawa-Connelly for the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP) 2023.
SECONDARY APPS

AKA "Supplementals"

Feeling pretty good having submitted my primary application:

Realizing that means that soon I'll have to start writing my secondaries:
Components

- **Application components:**
  - Primary application
  - Secondary application
  - Letter packet
  - Standardized test scores

- **Reviewer order:**
  - 1. Personal statement
  - 2. Secondary essay
What is a secondary application?

- "Supplemental"
- Format varies
- Usually 1-2 additional [school-specific] questions
- Further chance to differentiate yourself from other applicants
- Your responses are great fodder for things to be asked at an interview, too!
SECONDARY APPS

Which schools?

- Which schools require them?
  - **MD**: Generally required
    - Free MSAR report: "Secondary Application Information"
  - **DO**: Generally required
    - Choose DO Explorer: "Admissions Process"
  - **Dental**: Varies; half-half
    - Dental Explorer
# ADEA Dental Explorer

## UConn SODM

### APPLICATION PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dental School ...</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participates in ADEA AADSAS® (ADEA Associated American Dental Schools Application Service)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts direct applicants?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires a secondary or supplemental application?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a secondary or supplemental application website?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who receives them?

- Which applicants receive them?
  - Generally, all applicants
  - Some schools may only send to selected applicants ("screened applicants")
  - School will send you an invitation to complete them via email
Cost

- How much do they cost?
  - Secondary fees: $30-$120/school
    - UConn SOM: $85
    - Quinnipiac SOM: $100
    - U Hawaii SOM: $150
  - Many schools will waive secondary fees if you're a recipient of a fee assistance program
SECONDARY APPS

When?

• When do applicants receive them?
  ○ Most typical: 1-2 weeks after your primary is verified
  ○ Some faster, some slower
  ○ February-April is still possible...!

UCONN
PRE-MEDICAL AND PRE-DENTAL ADVISING OFFICE
SECONDARY APPS

Turnaround

- How fast should you submit them?
  - **Top schools:** Within a few days
  - **All schools:** *No longer than two weeks after the invitation--no matter when the deadline is*

Me: "I can definitely finish all my homework tomorrow before class, I've got plenty of time."
Best practices

- Best practices
  - PRE-DRAFT
  - Prioritize your most important schools
  - Refer to your own UConn HPAP responses (*winkwink*)
  - Keep a steady output and use incentives for motivation
  - Unless truly N/A, it's a good idea to answer any optional questions
Typical Qs

- How do your unique personal characteristics and background contribute to the university’s educational mission of creating a diverse entering class?

- Which points of your character would you like to highlight to the admissions committee?

- What is one non-medical activity that has had a significant impact on you?
Typical Qs

- Describe a crisis/conflict situation in your life. How did you deal with it, and how has it affected you?

- MD programs: How has COVID-19 affected you?
UConn SOM Past Qs

Highlight your experiences in the health care field. What insights have you gained about potential problems you will face as a physician?

How will the University of Connecticut School of Medicine best serve your needs of becoming a physician or physician scientist?

Please take a moment to explain how the COVID-19 pandemic directly and personally affected you as it pertains to preparing for medical school. (e.g. MCAT test date delay, financial impact, research/clinical experiences, self-quarantine, etc.).
Frank H. Netter MD SOM at Quinnipiac U

- If you will not be enrolled as a full-time student, how will you be spending/intend to spend your time during your application year? (150 words)
- What quality or attribute do you think is most important in being a physician? Please explain. (150 words)
- Please provide an experience when you have encountered and addressed a conflict. How did you work through the conflict? How would you apply what you learned from this experience as a medical student and future physician? (400 words)
- Netter SOM is a diverse and inclusive student body. What do you feel that you will bring to enrich the incoming SOM class and community? (200 words)
- In your experience through the COVID-19 Pandemic, how do you see your role as a frontline provider in future public health emergencies? (250 words)
- Please address any withdrawals, repeated courses, leaves of absence or breaks in your undergraduate education that are not explained in your application. (Optional) (250 words)
SECONDARY APPS

Frank H. Netter MD SOM at Quinnipiac U

- Quinnipiac SOM Past Q
- **OPTIONAL**: If you were to have a theme song, what would it be and why? (150 words)
- And these extra questions in Demographic Information section:
  - If you will not be enrolled as a full-time student, how will you be spending/intend to spend your time during your application year? (Limit 150 Words)
  - What area of medicine do you envision yourself working in at the end of your training? What is shaping your vision? (Limit 100 Words)
- **OPTIONAL**: Is there anything not captured in your application that you would like to share? (Limit 150 Words)
UMass SOM Past Qs

Q1) We would like to learn how you developed and demonstrated core professionalism competencies that are required of entering medical students. Please respond to the first prompt (#1; Diversity). Then select three of the other six prompts (#2-#7). Each response should be 150-200 words. Use the text box below for your answer. Separate each of your four responses by writing the competency above/before your response (example: Teamwork – All teams have their struggles, but they can be overcome...).
Texas

- Texas A&M SOM Past Qs 1
- [3500 characters each]

1. Describe briefly any experiences and/or skills that have made you more sensitive or appreciative of other cultures or the human condition.

2. The Texas A&M College of Medicine embraces the Aggie Core Values of Respect, Excellence, Leadership, Loyalty, Integrity and Selfless Service. Briefly discuss what activities demonstrate best that you would be a good custodian of these core values.
Texas

- Texas A&M SOM Past Qs 2
- 3. Describe any circumstances indicative of some hardship, such as, but not limited to, financial difficulties, personal or family illness, a medical condition, a death in the immediate family or educational disadvantage not mentioned in your primary application essays; OR describe any key academic, personal, or financial barriers that COVID-19 may have posed on you or your immediate family.
DO/Dental

- **[DO]** Write an autobiographical statement in 6,000 characters. Are you acquainted with a DO physician? Tell us about your experiences working with this professional.

- **[Dental]** Discuss one activity or experience you listed in your AADSAS application as a means of providing evidence of your leadership skills or self-initiative.
SECONDARY APPS

Factors for Consideration

- Why *this* program? Mission, core values, special community tracks...not just for reasons of convenience

- How does *this* program give you an opportunity to make a meaningful social, educational, and scientific contribution to the medical community in terms of patients, other medical students, and faculty?

- Precisely answer *the question that’s being asked*
SECONDARY APPS

Factors for Consideration

- Don't simply reiterate your resume
- Think of secondaries as the continuation of a conversation
- Have others proofread
- Time management

AFTER MEDICAL SCHOOL SECONDARIES

FAMILY? FRIENDS? ANYONE?
SJT

- Situational Judgement Tests (SJT)
  - Casper exam (Altus)
  - AAMC PREview exam (AAMC)
  - Free MSAR report: "Additional Required Assessments"
Upcoming

- Interviewing prep! **Wednesday, July 12**
  - Navigating the Healthcare Admissions Interview Workshop with the CCD
  - Interactive MMI session
  - Alumni panel

- Interview Pairing Program
  - [Office link](#)
CONTACT US

Visit our website
premed.uconn.edu
if you want more information
about our office

Email us at
premed_predental@uconn.edu
at any time with questions

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