

# INTERVIEW TIPS FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL

## Preparation:

- Reread your AMCAS application
- Read Time/Newsweek; Watch CNN. You may be asked about your perspective on current events (particularly those with a medical, science, or humanitarian slant)
- Plan your appearance. You should wear a suit and tie (dry cleaned), be clean shaven with a recent hair cut
- Have a clear understanding of the interview format and schedule
- Know the mission of the school and any guiding principles the school promotes (e.g., the Core Competencies for IUSOM)
- Plan to arrive early; consider getting a hotel room close to the campus instead of driving the morning of the interview. Use MapQuest to get an exact location
- Bring a briefcase or carry-along (professional looking), pen and paper to take notes and write your own questions (do not show up completely empty handed)

## Activities Related to the Interview:

- Overnight program with a medical student
- Orientation (most schools have this)
  - Get specifics on the day's schedule
  - Use this time to relax and collect your thoughts
- Tour the campus
  - Often given by medical students and not part of the official interview, **BUT ALWAYS ACT PROFESSIONAL**
- Interaction with Admissions and staff
  - Be as courteous and friendly as possible; even when you aren't formally being interviewed, your behavior is being noticed

## Format of the Interview:

- Interviewers can be
  - Faculty (adjunct faculty, clinicians and scientists)
  - Administrators
  - Senior Students
- Length of Interview – usually around 45 min but can vary significantly
- Most experienced interviewers try to put students at ease to get to know the person behind the AMCAS, though on occasion interviewers will try to “stump” the interviewee
- Layout
  - Know the format before you go! Some schools have several individual interviews, others have only one with 2-3 interviewers
  - Open vs. Closed
  - Studentdoctor.net has good student feedback about interview format
  - Do not hesitate to call the admission's office to clarify interview format, or visit your pre-health advisor to get information specific to your school

#### Interview Performance:

- Appearance and style count
- Honesty, Honesty, Honesty. You are interviewing with a sophisticated audience who is experienced at getting at the truth
- You must convey a strong sense of purpose, motivation and sense of direction
- Articulate and objective answers – know what you want to say before it comes out of your mouth
- Courtesy, tact, and a sense of humor are generally well-received ( be careful, though, and avoid being flip or “too friendly”)
- Expect to be nervous. Avoid nervous habits, speak slowly and deliberately

#### Common Questions:

- Tell me about yourself (a great opportunity to bring out your most interesting and unique experiences and viewpoints and often used to relax the candidate). Remember, they are not looking for your biography, but rather qualities you can contribute to the field and experiences that demonstrate this
- Questions centered around the school mission/philosophy – it is important to do your homework about the school (e.g. IUSOM’s Core Competencies)
- Why do you want to be a doctor? This question is harder than you think. Be ready for it and be articulate. Bring in experiences that have motivated you or inspired you. Speak with experiences and from the heart
- What would you like to tell me about yourself; again, a great opportunity to bring up points you want them to know like hobbies and interests that set you apart
- Questions about controversial issues – be familiar with today’s events. If you don’t know, don’t pretend. It’s not the issue or your answer, it’s the logic. Be sure to come across as thoughtful and not reactionary. Appreciate the grey areas.

#### Follow-up to the Interview:

- Send a thank-you note to the interviewer(s), addressed to the individual or the admission’s committee. Remember the names of the interviewer(s) and write them on your paper so you can refer to them directly in your note
- Most schools will give you a timeline for the acceptance process, and it is certainly appropriate for you to ask if they don’t. Be patient. You might suddenly feel powerless after gearing up for so long. Don’t hesitate to contact your pre-health advisor if you’re getting antsy
- Visit your pre-health advisor following the interview to debrief
- Medical school admission’s committees do not tend to respond well to “connections.” Never send gifts or push

#### Topics you should know something about:

- Healthcare Reform: HMO, PPO, Single Payer System, etc
- Euthanasia: Terry Schiavo
- Abortion
- Stem Cell Research
- AIDS in the Third World