

October 2007

Dear Student,

We have prepared this handbook to make it easier for you to understand the evaluation process implemented by the Health Professions Evaluation Committee (HPEC). This committee is made up of twenty faculty members and administrators representing several academic areas throughout The University of Scranton. See the following page for a list of committee members.

Third-year students (and others seeking application for the class matriculating in 2009) will be evaluated using the procedures outlined in this handbook. We will be providing professional school admissions committees with an extensive narrative description of you as a student, as a person, and as a future health professional. Your final evaluation package will include the input of up to six faculty members: three faculty members who write letters of evaluation, two committee members who interview you, and the Director of Medical School Placement.

This evaluation procedure requires a significant effort and time commitment from you as well as from your faculty. In order for us to write comprehensive letters of evaluation, we need your participation. You will provide information to us by completing a biographical questionnaire and by composing an original essay (your personal statement); both should be carefully prepared. The details are included in the following pages.

This handbook was put together to answer your specific questions. **Please read it completely and carefully.** If, however, you still have questions about the evaluation process after reading this guide, please call 7901 to make an appointment to see me. Good luck in preparing for a fulfilling career in health care.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Engel, Ph.D.
Director of Medical School Placement
Chair, Health Professions Evaluation Committee

Health Professions Evaluation Committee 2007-2008

Timothy J. Cadigan, S.J., Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Biology

Michael C. Cann, Ph.D.
Professor, Chemistry

J. Timothy Cannon, Ph.D.
Professor, Psychology

Dona Carpenter, R.N., Ed.D.
Professor, Nursing

Stephen Casey, MA
Associate Professor, Theology

John Deak, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Chemistry

Joseph H. Dreisbach, Ph.D.
Professor, Chemistry
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Mary F. Engel, Ph.D.
University Director of Fellowship Programs
Director of Medical School Placement

Timothy D. Foley, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Chemistry

Darla R. Germeroth, Ph.D.
Professor, Communication
Associate Dean, CAS

George R. Gomez, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Biology

Michael A. Hardisky, Ph.D.
Professor, Biology

Thomas P. Hogan, Ph.D.
Professor, Psychology

Sharon S. Hudacek, R.N., Ed.D.
Professor, Nursing

Ronald J. McKinney, S.J., Ph.D.
Professor, Philosophy

David A. Rusak, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Chemistry

Jennifer A. Tripp, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Chemistry

Robert F. Waldeck, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Biology

Joan M. Wasilewski, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Chemistry

Christine A. Zakzewski, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Physics/
Electrical Engineering

Evaluation Process for Pre-Health Professions Students

Applicants to doctoral programs in schools of allopathic and osteopathic medicine, dentistry, optometry, podiatry, veterinary medicine and chiropractic:

This evaluation process normally takes place in the spring semester of your junior year. The outline presented below shows a chronological schedule of events for the semester. The end result is an evaluation package including the letter from the Health Professions Evaluation Committee, copies of three faculty letters of evaluation, and one (optional) letter from a health professional. **It will not include the biographical questionnaire or the personal statement you submitted to the HPEC committee.**

Note that your evaluation package will include **all** letters of reference submitted to the committee prior to the announced deadlines. You will not have the opportunity to pick and choose individual letters to include or exclude from the evaluation package.

OCTOBER: Orientation Meeting

During this meeting, the Director of Medical School Placement will review the entire evaluation process. All junior students and other applicants who expect to be evaluated this year **must** attend the orientation meeting.

The orientation meeting is **not** limited to junior students. First and second-year students are also **encouraged** to attend, so that you will know what to expect when it is your turn to be evaluated by the committee. At the orientation meeting, you will be told about the requirements to complete your HPEC file: 1) biographical questionnaire, 2) original essay, 3) three faculty letters of evaluation, 4) interview preference sheet, 5) file waiver, and 6) photo.

Please note – this meeting is held in October in order to give students adequate time to prepare materials to support their application, which may be submitted any time between **January 3rd** and **March 7th** (2008). Your HPO officers strongly recommend that you submit your materials before Spring semester begins. If you procrastinate until the last minute, you will be facing midterms and the HPEC deadline at the same time (as well as preparing for the MCAT).

INSTRUCTIONS:

1) Student Biographical Questionnaire

You will be provided with a set of questions to answer about yourself. You will prepare answers to each of these questions, not to exceed four pages, **single spaced**, one-inch margin on all sides.

Answer each of the questions in order, placing the number of the questions in front of your answer. It is NOT necessary to type the question. See the sample on page 10.

Use a computer to prepare and edit your responses. Hand in a hard copy of the completed questionnaire, not a computer disk or e-mail. Much of the material you prepare for the Health Professions Evaluation Committee [HPEC] will be quite similar to the material you'll need to prepare for AMCAS, AACOMAS, ADSAS, VMCAS, etc. We do NOT send this biographical questionnaire as part of your HPEC file. Keep a copy of your questionnaire for your own files. It will be useful when you file your primary application.

2) Essay

Compose an original essay, telling the committee about yourself. There is no set format for the content of your essay. This is your “personal statement” and it will be read carefully by your interviewers and by the Director of Medical School Placement. Your essay should be no more than a page and a half in length. The essay must be typed, single-spaced, and must not exceed 750 words.

Most of you will need to compose an essay for your applications to health-professions schools. You may decide to use the same essay for those applications. The essay is an important part of your professional school application, so give careful thought to its content, grammar, and spelling, as well as to your audience. **Ask a friend or two to comment upon and/or proofread your essay:** Mistakes in spelling, grammar, and punctuation make a very poor impression. It is not appropriate to ask your letter of evaluation writers to proofread your essay as they are already committing time on your behalf. You may find, however, that your HPEC interviewers may ask questions about or make suggestions for revising your essay before you submit it to the schools to which you will apply; it would be a good idea to review the essay after your committee interview. *(Note: we do not send this essay as part of your HPEC file. It is used for on-campus evaluation only.)*

3) Soliciting Letters Of Recommendation

You will solicit letters of evaluation from three faculty members, with **two of the letters coming from science or math professors.**

One faculty member in your major,

One faculty member in a cognate (or second major or minor),

One faculty member from a non-major area.

Ask for your letters **as early as possible and in person.** A waiver form must accompany each letter of evaluation. Give one letter of reference packet to each of the three faculty members who agree to write a letter for you. Please remind faculty members to return your signed waiver with the letter they write. **Admissions Committees do not hold non-confidential letters in high regard.**

Choose faculty members who know you well, who are aware of your strengths and shortcomings. You might want to ask faculty members with whom you have had more than one class. You are asking this person to give up an hour or two of his/her time for you. If the faculty member seems hesitant to agree to write a letter for you, you would be well advised to ask a different person to write your letter.

Things to keep in mind when asking for a letter of recommendation:

- **Give the letter writer as much information as possible:** Make a copy of your biographical questionnaire to distribute to your letter writers. Give them a copy of your personal statement/essay; provide a resume if possible.
- **ASK for the letter of evaluation personally.** Do *not* send the form in the mail. Do not *tell* the person that you *need* a letter of evaluation.
- **Give the letter writer *at least three weeks* to write the letter.** The deadline for letters is March 2nd; make sure that you have asked your three referees as soon as possible, preferably before Intersession. If you delay asking for a letter, the faculty member may already have received many other requests.
- Review the list of committee members on page 2. If you know whom you would like to choose as your committee interviewers, *do not ask those faculty members* to write a letter on your behalf.
- On the “Interview Preference Sheet,” (Pg. 13) list the faculty whom you have asked for letters, and the dates you gave each referee the form. To see if your letters were received, consult the listing posted on the first floor of Loyola Hall and the bulletin board outside St. Thomas 312; this listing is updated several times a week until the time that interviews begin. After that time, it will be updated weekly. **It is YOUR responsibility to make sure that the letters are received by the Committee.**
- Do not arrange for more than three faculty letters, and make sure that you arrange for only one letter each from your major, cognate, and non-major professors. Any additional faculty letters will be held in your file but will not be part of your evaluation package.
- Some applicants ask for letters of evaluation from health professionals with whom they have worked. If you believe that such a letter would improve your application, you may ask **one** such individual to write a letter to be included in your evaluation package. That optional letter should be addressed to the Health Professions Evaluation Committee, care of Dr. Engel. The **final deadline** for receipt of this letter is June 15th, but it is clearly in your best interest to request that the letter be sent prior to your interview. Any letter received after that deadline will be held in your file but will not be sent to admissions officers as part of your evaluation package. (*If you plan to apply to an osteopathic medical school, you should get a letter from an osteopathic physician, inasmuch as most osteopathic schools require this.*)
- Any “character reference” letters from others (clergy, employers, politicians, family or friends) are **not** appropriate and will not be included in your HPEC evaluation. If you believe that such a letter would benefit you, have it sent *directly to the medical schools*.

Important Dates

Friday, March 7th: Deadline for essay and biographical questionnaire

You have over four months to complete your biographical questionnaire and your essay. You should also make sure that you have completed a “Self Assessment for Pre-professional Students” (available in STT 312 or on the HPO website) sometime during the 2007-2008 academic year. Hand deliver your materials to T-312. Ms. Pauline Palko or Dr. Engel will check them for completeness and assign you a priority number based on when you handed in all these materials. This priority number will be used to decide your choice for the two-person interviewing team. **The earlier that you hand in all the materials for your file, the greater the probability that you will get your choice for interviewers.** Indicate your first, second, third, and fourth choices on **the Interview Preference Sheet** (Pg. 13), then read and sign the **Request for Evaluation by HPEC Certification Statement and Signature** (Pg. 14) that you hand in with the other materials for your file.

If you submit materials after the March 7th deadline, it is not necessary to list your choice on the interview preference sheet, since you will most likely forfeit your ability to choose your interviewers. If you do not submit materials by March 7th, you will run the risk of not being evaluated by the Health Professions Evaluation Committee during 2007-2008.

March 10th: HPEC interview assignments

Interview assignments will be made based on the priority numbers for each student. These interview assignments will be posted on the HPEC bulletin board outside T312, and they will be sent to each member of the committee.

Note: It is your responsibility to arrange an appointment with the interview team to whom you are assigned.

As soon as possible, preferably before Easter break, schedule a one-hour interview between March 25th and April 18th. Location of sign-up sheet is noted on the Interview Preference Sheet (Pg 13). (Remember that Easter/ Spring Break is March 15th - 24th.)

March 25th - April 18th: Interviews

It is up to YOU to contact your interviewers to schedule your interview. Do so early. Your interviewers will have a copy of your completed HPEC file (faculty letters of evaluation, a copy of your University transcript, your biographical questionnaire, and your essay). One purpose of the interview is to gather information about you to help admissions committees know more about you. Other purposes of this interview are to provide you an opportunity both to have a “trial run” at such an interview and to receive feedback on your responses and demeanor. The format of the interview may vary from one applicant to another.

You should, for example, be prepared to discuss your academic record, extracurricular and volunteer activities, reasons for choosing your career, and current events in medicine, dentistry, etc. Following the interview, your interviewers will submit a draft letter or interview notes to the Director of Medical School Placement.

Note: If you have an HPEC interview and then later decide NOT to apply to a Health Professions school, please let Dr. Engel know this. Call or send an e-mail message. Each letter

requires a great deal of effort on the part of your faculty interviewers and they should not be asked to do work which is not necessary.

MCAT:

Students who are planning to apply to medical school or podiatry school the following Fall will take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) sometime during the year preceding the year in which they intend to matriculate in medical school. Please consult AAMC website (www.aamc.org/mcat) to obtain information about test dates, registration deadlines, and test sites.

DAT will need to be taken at a Prometric Testing Center. Please see ADA website (ada.org) to obtain information about the DAT. (It would be wise to take the DAT before the end of the Spring semester, 2008.)

OAT is offered year round and an examinee can select date, time, and test center. Examinees receive their scores immediately after completion of the test at the test center. Online application and information are available at (opted.org/info_oat.cfm).

GRE is required by most veterinary schools.

MAY (before leaving campus for the Summer)

- Fill out “Summer Plans Update.” This information may prove useful to the HPEC Committee as they write your evaluation. This form is on page 15 of this booklet.
- Pick up transcript request forms from Registrar’s Office.
- Obtain “Evaluation Request” and extra letter waiver forms before you leave campus.
- If you are eligible for a “Fee Reduction” (AADSAS), “Fee Assistance” (AMCAS), “Fee Waiver” (AACOMAS), **please file all necessary paperwork as soon as possible.**

June 1st - processing of AMCAS and AACOMAS materials begins on or about this date.

Admissions deans stress that it is crucial to file the Primary Applications as early as possible. Prior to this date, AMCAS and AACOMAS application materials will be available on the Web. You should begin to complete application services materials during late Spring-early Summer.

When you file your Primary Application, **you will need to arrange for official transcripts** to be sent to the application service, according to whatever method the service specifies. You will need to send a transcript from each institution you have attended.

AADSAS-on-the-web is available at (www.aadsas.adea.org)

For information about applications to veterinary, optometry, chiropractic, and podiatry schools, contact the pre-health professions advising office and/or the school(s) to which you seek admission. Also look on the HPO web site's links page (academic.uofs.edu/organization/hpo/links).

After you have submitted your primary application, please send a copy of it to Dr. Engel. Your HPEC file will not be released until we have a copy of the primary application you submitted.

June 15th

This is the absolute deadline for all faculty and outside letters of evaluation to be included in the evaluation package. For technical reasons, letters received after this date *cannot* be added to your evaluation package. Such letters will be held in your file, but will not be included as part of the evaluation package sent to admissions officers of the health profession schools.

During May and June, the committee members and Dr. Engel will compose a detailed evaluation letter based on the information contained in your file, and on the opinions expressed by the interviewers. Committee members will receive copies of proposed “final” letters for each of their interviewees and will have the opportunity to suggest changes before the final evaluation package is submitted to medical schools.

As soon as you decide where you will apply for admission, fill out Evaluation Request forms as you prepare your secondary applications. By law, no evaluation packages can be sent without your completing and signing this form. **These evaluation letters may not be used for any purpose other than an application to a health professions school.**

Take enough Evaluation Request forms home with you during the summer break so that we don't have to mail them to you. Use a ballpoint pen and press hard; you are making four copies of the form. Please write legibly. Give us complete and clear contact information for you.

If the schools to which you are applying use VirtualEvals, you may list more than one school on a single evaluation request form, and you only need to give us the **current** name of the school. To ascertain whether the school to which you're applying uses VirtualEvals (most M.D., D.O., and many O.D. schools used VE in 2007), click on “participants” (in right-hand bar at www.virtualeval.org). If your application is going to a school that does not participate in VE, please put only one school on an evaluation request form, and give us a complete address for that school. All dental school applications now require transmission of a .pdf file, so you may fill out one form and give us your AADSAS application so that we know where your file will need to be transmitted.

Sign the Evaluation Request form.

Promptly answer phone calls/e-mails from Pauline Palko or Dr. Engel. Give us your AAMC, AACOMAS, AADSAS, VMCAS or other professional “ID” number as soon as you know it.

Note: Print legibly! Be sure all four copies are readable.

Late Summer-Fall 2008

Give Dr. Engel **your local (school) phone number and address when you return to campus.** Participate actively in all HPO activities.

Throughout the summer and in the early Fall, process secondary applications in a timely fashion. Most secondary applications will be submitted electronically. For paper applications, you should type them unless your handwriting is exceptionally neat. Pay careful attention to any special requirements that an individual school may make. Make a copy of each secondary application.

When you receive an invitation to an interview, arrange your travel so that you have time to become familiar with the campus. Check out the school's web site and talk to other students who may have interviewed at the school or who may be attending the school. Try on your "interviewing suit" before you leave Scranton and have a backup plan for any occurrences such as coffee spilled on your shirt/blouse or a two-hour traffic jam on the Schuylkill. *When you return from each interview, fill out an interview feedback form so that your colleagues may benefit from your experience.*

Make sure that your e-mail address and your voice mail recording conveys a professional image: i.e., psycho.trouble@aol.com and dizzychick@hotmail are not recommended e-mail identities. Medical schools may call your cell phone to schedule interviews. This is your first chance to make a good impression. Any greeting other than a simple statement of your name, your phone number and a request for a message is unprofessional and reflects poorly on you. Please review carefully the information in the "**Technology Awareness**" overview prepared by John Mercuri and Dan Ostermayer, Class of 2007.

Let us know of each acceptance you receive and where you decide to matriculate. Let us know of any scholarships you receive.

STUDENT BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Submit a photo with your materials to help us know who you are. Professional photos are not needed; casual photos with friends, pets, and family members are acceptable.

(Please provide information following the **specific** outline below - you do not need to type the names of the categories, but **you do need to follow the numerical order exactly**.)

1. Last Name, First, Middle
2. Royal I.D. Number:
3. Date of Birth:
4. Expected Graduation: (mo/yr)
5. Permanent address:
Phone number at this address:
6. Local (school) address: e-mail address (school and/or home)
Phone number at this address:
Cell phone:
7. State of legal residence:
8. List your father's name, occupation, and highest education level.
9. List your mother's name, occupation, and highest education level.
10. List the names and ages of all your brothers and sisters.
11. List the name and city of your high school.
12. List your verbal and math SAT scores. Indicate whether you feel that they accurately predicted your academic performance in college.
13. List your major(s) and any minor(s).
14. Explain your rationale for choosing major, cognate, and general education courses.
15. What course outside your major has had the most influence on you?
16. Indicate whether you are enrolled in SJLA, Honors, or Business Leadership Programs.
17. Describe all academic honors received, including scholarships, and honor societies, Dean's List, etc. Be specific and include dates where appropriate.
18. Describe your extracurricular activities. Specify the nature of your involvement (length of time involved in organization, positions held, projects coordinated, etc.)

19. List your significant volunteer activities. Be specific, detailing your duties, and estimate the total hours spent on each volunteer activity. If your volunteer activities include medical work, provide the names of the physicians involved, and carefully describe your duties.
20. List all paid jobs that you held, including summer and Intersession jobs. Be specific, detailing your duties, how long you worked for each employer, and how many hours per week you worked. If you have worked more than 15 hours per week during the academic year, it might be useful to discuss why you've done so and to note the percentage of your college expenses you have paid for by yourself. Also, if you have unusual family responsibilities (care of a young child, elderly parent or relative), please indicate that if you choose.
21. Have you done research at The University of Scranton, or elsewhere? With whom? Describe your work, listing any publications, or scientific meetings that you attended. Indicate the total number of hours per week and the number of weeks devoted to research.
22. How do you spend your free time? What are your hobbies?
23. Other than books assigned for class, what books have you read in the past 12 months? (hint: if the answer to this question is none, start reading . . .)
24. Have you been the recipient of institutional action for any disciplinary or academic reason? Answer Yes or No. If Yes, provide details.
25. What newspapers and magazines do you read regularly? How often do you read them?
26. Do you have competence in any language other than English? Describe your ability to read, write, speak and understand the language.
27. Have you lived or studied abroad? If you and/or your parents immigrated to the United States please discuss (if you choose to do so) the circumstances of immigration.
28. What alternative choices are you considering if you are not admitted into Medical/Dental School?
29. What sets you apart from other students? What makes you unique?
30. List the type of professional school to which you will apply.
Choose from these:

Allopathic (M.D.) or (MD/Ph.D)	Dental (D.M.D., D.D.S.)	Optometry (O.D.)
Chiropractic (D.C.)	Veterinary (D.V.M., V.M.D.)	Podiatric (D.P.M.)
Osteopathic (D.O.)		
31. (optional) If you experienced any significant loss or illness during your college career that resulted in academic difficulties during a specific term or terms, you may wish to discuss that here or during your interview.

*** * * SAMPLE ONLY * * ***

1. Quigley, Jeanne M.
2. R12345678
3. 12-14-87
4. Graduation Date: 5/2009
5. Permanent address: 1287 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10021
201-342-7316
6. Local address: 231 Driscoll Hall X 4306 quigleyj2@scranton.edu cell: 201-433-9999
7. New York
8. My father is Herb Quigley, a spice distributor, graduate of Saint Joseph's High School, Brooklyn, NY.
9. My mother is Iris Quigley, an optometrist, graduate of Pennsylvania College of Optometry.
10. I have a brother, Tom, age 16, a sophomore in high school.
I have a sister, Margaret, age 19, a freshman at U of S.
11. Saint Joseph's High School, Brooklyn, NY
12. Verbal SAT was 680 Math SAT was 620.
I believe, in my case, that the SAT scores accurately predicted my academic performance at The University of Scranton.
13. My major is Biology. My minors are Philosophy and Spanish.
14. I chose my Biology courses not only to fulfill degree requirements, but also to give me exposure to the latest developments in biology (neurobiology and molecular biology, for example). I also chose a number of courses in Philosophy (Phil 228 and 318) that allowed me to get a more balanced education. The general education courses that I took were fun, interesting, and allowed me to look at issues from another point of view (for example, Art History, Sociology, and History). I chose to study Spanish so that I might communicate more effectively with Spanish-speaking patients.
15. I took Philosophy 434, Issues in Philosophy and Theology, last semester with Dr. Baillie, and that course influenced how I view my role in facing important social issues. For example, I now realize that there are problems more critical than my performance on the calculus quiz tomorrow morning. This course helped me to see the big picture.
16. I am enrolled in the SJLA Program.
17. I was on the Dean's List for Fall 2005, Spring 2006, and Fall 2007. I am in Alpha Epsilon Delta.

**INTERVIEW PREFERENCE SHEET
HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPLICANTS CLASS OF 2009**

Your name _____ Your e-mail address _____

Indicate your first, second, third and fourth choice of interview teams. Remember, you will have a single interview with one of these pairs of committee members. To ensure the most balanced evaluation possible, you should request interviewers who are not already writing a letter of evaluation on your behalf.

- ___ Drs. Robert Waldeck and Stephen Casey (sign-up sheet posted at L-106)
- ___ Drs. George Gomez and Tom Hogan (sign-up sheet posted at L-118)
- ___ Drs. Michael Cann and Dona Carpenter (sign-up sheet posted at L-307)
- ___ Drs. Timothy Cannon and Darla Germeroth (sign-up sheet posted at T-308)
- ___ Drs. Joseph Dreisbach, Sharon Hudacek, Mary Engel (sign-up sheet posted at T-312)
- ___ Fr. Tim Cadigan, Drs. David Rusak and John Deak (sign-up sheet posted at L-218)
- ___ Drs. Michael Hardisky and Christine Zakzewski (sign-up sheet posted at L-207)
- ___ Drs. Jennifer Tripp and Joan Wasilewski (sign-up sheet posted at L-311)
- ___ Fr. Ron McKinney and Dr. Tim Foley (sign-up sheet posted at L-310)

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Letters requested from: (Major) _____ Received _____
 (Cognate _____
 (GE) _____

_____ (optional) Professional Preceptor _____

Date submitted _____ Priority _____

Request for evaluation by Health Professions Evaluation Committee Certification Statement and Signature

Your signature is required for committee evaluation

By signing below, I certify that all information submitted to my HPEC file is current, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. **My signature also indicates my permission for members of the Health Professions Evaluation Committee to have access to my University records, including all records of academic and disciplinary action, both prior to and subsequent to evaluation by the committee.**

I understand **that a copy of this form will be placed in my permanent file at The University of Scranton.**

I authorize and fully consent to the Health Professions Evaluation Committee to prepare an evaluation for me. I realize that my evaluation will likely contain both positive and negative comments, and I release The University of Scranton, its employees and Board of Trustees from any and all liability.

Regarding your access to the evaluation letter from the Health Professions Evaluation Committee, please check one line, and sign below:

I waive my right of access to the evaluation letter prepared by the Health Professions Evaluation Committee. I understand that the contents of this letter will be confidential, and will not be available to me now or in the future.

I do NOT waive my right of access to my HPEC letter of evaluation.

Signature _____ Date _____

The University of Scranton joins in celebration with its students. If you are accepted to a Health Professions School, The University would like to share the good news with the community, and we ask your permission to do so. If you wish to grant this permission, please indicate this by signing your name below.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please do not submit this form until AFTER Easter Break.

