

# Interviewing for Health-related Careers

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RIT Class of 2000

# Disclosure

- I am on the admissions committee of the medical school at Upstate

# Background

- Proud RIT alum - Class of 2000 - IT Major
- Currently serve on the RIT Alumni Association Board of Directors
- Master of Science in Education - Health Science
- Medical school - SUNY Upstate Class of 2010
- Residency - Emergency Medicine - Albany Medical Center
- Fellowship - EMS Medicine - University at Buffalo

# Health-related careers

- Allied health professions
  - Nursing
  - Medicine (physician)
  - Research
- 
- All in high-demand

# Start with the conclusions

- 1. The application and interview process for health-related careers tends to be conservative in style and content
- 2. It isn't about saving the world
- 3. RIT isn't Harvard, nor are we the UoR
- 4. Grades and scores vs the interview
- 5. What's your plan B?
- 6. Anticipate tough questions

# Conservative



# Interview Protocol

- YOU should stand out, as a person, not your clothing and mannerisms
- Address people by title
- Know about the school/program/job you're interviewing for/at
- Have questions prepared
- Now is not the time to take an exceedingly unpopular opinion unless you are you can back it up
- Sit upright, talk clearly, be aware of your presentation

# What do I look for in an interview?

- Sincerity
- Nervousness
- Excitement



# Two-way interview

- In every interview, you are being interviewed and you are interviewing
- Know ahead of time what you want to get out of the interview
- Have questions prepared
  
- Do your homework

# Send a thank you note

- You might be surprised how rare this is
- Send it to your interviewer
- If it's a school, send it to the director of admissions
- If you're interested, tell them!
- Updated grades, interests, experiences, publications

# Good Reasons

- 1. A desire to help people
- 2. Interest in science
- 3. Intellectual stimulation

# Problematic Reasons

- 1. Save the world
- 2. I can't see myself doing anything else
- 3. My \_\_\_\_\_ is a \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. I've wanted to do this since I was three years old
- 5. I want a good job with a guaranteed income



# A Helping Profession

- All healthcare professions in some way involve helping people
- It is great, and necessary, to want to help people and to convey this during an interview
- Try to avoid overly unrealistic goals and making yourself seem as if you are the single solution to society's healthcare problems
- If your answer to a question starts with, "I want to help people," make sure you know what you're going to follow that with

# RIT

- You attend a tremendous school that puts out some of the most creative, innovative and work-ready students of any university
- You do NOT attend a school that fits into a traditional mold for producing health professions students
- Ranking systems rate RIT variably
  
- Be prepared to talk about the wonderful opportunities here
- Be prepared for people to understand RIT as a “tech school”

# Barron's

- 1 Schools - UoR, RPI, Cornell, SUNY Geneseo
- 2 Schools - Binghamton, Syracuse
- 3 Schools - Nazareth, UB, RIT
- 4 Schools - SUNY Brockport



# NIH Research Funding

- RIT - \$3.5m
- UoR - \$160m
- SUNY Geneseo - \$387k

# Grades and scores

- Grades and scores usually get you an interview
- The interview usually gets you the job/program/acceptance
- Keep in mind that the college's ranking/reputation will affect what GPA people expect
- Be prepared to talk about your grades and scores but don't bring them up on your own

# What if my grades are low

- Be aware of this ahead of time, make sure you know you're transcript inside and out
- Freshman effect
- Personal struggles
  
- Did they (hopefully) get better?
- Avoid blaming the professor, school

# What if my \_\_\_ score is low?

- Healthcare professions utilize standardized tests
- Saying “I’m not a good test taker” is a no-no
  
- Do your grades paint a different picture?
- Can you take the test again?

# How do I explain \_\_\_?

- Institutional actions
- Criminal convictions



# Should I have a plan B, C, D, etc.?

- What if you don't get in? What if you don't get the job?
- Different approaches
  - Try, try and try again
  - Go in a corner and cry
  - I won't fail so I haven't thought about it
  - Choose a different profession
  - I don't know

# Ethics

- Almost every health-related profession deals with ethical issues
- Have you thought about this?
- Have you taken a basic ethics course?
  
- What sort of questions do you anticipate being asked?



# Sample questions

- Delivering bad news
- Organ transplantation issues
- Rationing care
- Substance abuse
- Research integrity
- Incidental findings

# Should I be prepared for “pimping?”

- How do you treat?
- What are the indications for?
- What do you think the diagnosis is?
- What tests would you order?
- How do you run this test?
- How would you explain this to the patient?

# The Family Effect

- My parent was a \_\_\_\_\_ and so I want to be too.
- I come from a family of \_\_\_\_\_.
- I've been using a play stethoscope since I was two.
- Expect a challenge as to how you've thought this through and had your own experiences



# Shadowing

- If you've done it, be prepared to talk about it
- Important point - how has it confirmed your decision to become a \_\_\_ or enter \_\_\_ school?
- If you haven't done it, stop, and go do it

# Letters

- Picking letter writers is important, and a difficult process
- You want to ask but also give them an opportunity to say no
- “Everyone thinks your Saint Peter”
- Committee letters

# Overall Recommendations

- Be yourself, as long as it's conservative
- Know the answers to the questions
- Know everything about every piece of data the interviewers have access to
- Say thank you

# Questions?

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