

PreMed/PreHealth Advising: Background and Registration information

Updated: February 2018

Rensselaer offers advising for students considering further study in medicine or another health-related field. The program is coordinated by the PreHealth Professions Committee. Interested students must apply for acceptance to the advising program.

PREHEALTH PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Michael H Hanna, PhD, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, Chair
- Mariah Hahn, Professor Biomedical Engineering
- Douglas Swank, PhD, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences
- Alicia Walf, PhD, Lecturer, Cognitive Science
- Scott Bello, MD, MPH, PhD, Adjunct Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Pediatrician
- Meaghan Johnson, Assistant Director, Center for Career and Professional Development
- Jessica Wenger, Assistant Director, Career Services, Center for Career & Professional Development

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS FOR ALL PREHEALTH APPLICATIONS

It is essential that applicants complete the **Registration** and **Student Recommendation** forms by **March 2, 2018** so that we can get you on the roster. These forms are available electronically from Patricia Tedesco at tedesp@rpi.edu and should be returned to her as well. Both forms require your signature. However, if you are not comfortable sending as a signed PDF you will need to submit these documents as hard copies to the Advising & Learning Assistance Center (ALAC) in **Academy Hall 4226**.

Your application packet can be sent electronically to Ms. Tedesco and should include the following items:

1. A copy of your transcript (unofficial from SIS is fine to begin with, **but an official transcript is required at the completion of the spring semester**).
2. A formal resume.
3. A one page personal statement similar to that required in the AMCAS, AADSAS, or other pre-health common applications.
4. At least **4** letters of recommendation (**2** due by March 2nd) using the **Student Recommendation** forms for pre-medical and pre-dental. Two of these letters **must** be from faculty members, preferably in the sciences. Letters from other sources are highly encouraged. Most other pre-health professions require three letters of recommendation and often have different emphasis.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Take the time to choose recommenders who know you well and are aware of your background and interests in a career in medicine or other health-related fields. **Impress upon them your need for a letter with some depth beyond the usual platitudes**, which means an extended discussion will be necessary if you are not known well. Letters from sources other than faculty members may be helpful (Dean of Students, Directors of Programs, physicians who know you well, health professionals in your field of interest, faculty research mentors, church leaders, athletic coaches, etc.). These letters help the Committee learn about your non-academic self.

In accordance with policy at Rensselaer, students sign a waiver statement on their **Student Recommendation Form** and also on the **Registration Form**. Both forms must agree as to waiving or not waiving the right to review the letters of recommendation. The decision of a student with regard to waiving the right to view these confidential letters will be forwarded to the health professional schools as part of the Committee letter of recommendation. No letter of recommendation will be seen by anyone outside of the Committee without authorization of the student and the recommender. The Committee requests access to your personal file in the Dean of Students Office. Access will be limited to the Chair of the PreHealth Professions Committee and students sign a waiver statement on the registration form allowing or denying access. The student's decision regarding this waiver is also communicated to the health professional schools.

SUMMARY OF DEADLINES OF THE PREHEALTH PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

1. **March 2nd** –Registration Form, Student Recommendation Form, resume, personal statement, unofficial transcript, and at least **two** of the four letters of recommendation. (Remaining letters are due by August 3rd)
2. **April** - Committee interviews are scheduled.
3. **Registration for MCAT, DAT and GRE** is ongoing and should be completed after determining the best date for taking the exam.
4. **May** – AMCAS and AACOMAS web-based primary application opens. For other professions see 'quick reference' section of this site.
5. **August 3rd** – All remaining letters of recommendation must be submitted to the PreHealth Professions Committee in electronic form on or before **August 3rd**.
6. **August 6th - 31st** - Committee letters are completed and submitted to VirtualEvals.

WHAT IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT

Almost all health professions require either a single essay or multiple essays in which the applicant identifies certain characteristics of their personality, their experience, and their motivation for study in medical (or dental, etc.) schools. Each may have a minimum font and maximum number of characters allowed for the essay. These essays are difficult to write and often come out as bland statements along the following lines: "I love people, I love Science, I will be a great physician." They frequently start with a quote from some famous person. These "statements" do not say much. Students need to provide examples of their experiences that indicate why they would become good health care professionals. The Committee will read your first draft and provide feedback so that when you submit these letters to AMCAS, AADSAS, or other health professional programs they will be a better representation of you as an individual. Please remember that each school to which you apply will read well over a thousand of these letters every year. If you have special talents, make us and the schools aware of those talents. Make your letter worth reading. The first draft must be submitted prior to committee interviews.

INTERVIEW INSTRUCTIONS WITH PREHEALTH COMMITTEE

Interviews with applicants will be scheduled during April or sooner if the registration materials and at least two letters of recommendation have been returned. **No students will receive Committee letters without going through the interview process.** The purpose of the interview is to provide students with experience in interviewing techniques, counsel you concerning your overall record, and obtain information for use in your Committee letter of recommendation. The PreHealth Professions Committee provides a summary of your overall application (information gathered from your interview and application portfolio) and includes all of your letters of recommendation for each school to which you apply.

Interviews of approximately 45 minutes are scheduled during normal working hours, 9:00AM to 4:30PM, in **ALAC, 4226 Academy Hall**. **It is expected that applicants will present themselves in a business-like fashion.** Please have available for discussion a preliminary list of schools to which you will apply. Each applicant will be interviewed by two members of the Committee in one meeting. **Based upon the recommendations of the interviewers, applicants will be allowed to present additional information and letters of recommendation to their file until August 3rd.**

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

At the end of the spring semester (after your interview), a formal copy of your transcript, which includes your spring grades, MUST be submitted to the Committee. The MCAT (DAT, etc.) registration forms are available at www.aamc.org for medical applications. (For other health fields, see 'quick reference' section of this site.) The MCAT, DAT and GRE are given multiple times during the academic year. Applicants should be certain to sign up to take the exam at a time when they are prepared to take the test and early enough to meet the deadlines of the graduate health schools. In recent years, a few medical schools have refused to take MCAT exam results from September exam periods for that year's application cycle.

The AMCAS or primary application for medical school is available at the same web address listed above and is available typically during May through October. Students should submit their AMCAS or other common application in a timely fashion **and provide an electronic copy of the application** to the PreHealth Professions Committee addressed to **Patricia Tedesco**, tedesp@rpi.edu. **Any outstanding application materials/letters must be provided to the PreHealth Professions Committee on or prior to August 3rd.** Application materials presented after this will not be included with the Committee recommendation or the student's registration will be withdrawn by the Committee. No exceptions to this deadline will be made.