INFORMATION SESSION FOR COMMITTEE APPLICANTS TO HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOOLS 2020-2021 CYCLE

’68 CENTER FOR CAREER EXPLORATION – WILLIAMS COLLEGE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2019 – 7:00PM EASTERN

Information updated as of 12/17/2019 and is subject to change.
OBJECTIVES

- Introduce your Science & Health Professions support team
- Cover key concepts that are foundational to admission processes of health professions training programs
- Describe key applicant competencies for acceptance and matriculation
- Explain the timing of different application types
- Outline the Williams College Health Professions Committee process for matriculation in 2021 (*the next possible cycle*)
- Provide a space to cover preliminary questions as you start this process
We are here to support you throughout this process – from exploration to matriculation, and beyond!

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The Association of American Medical Colleges or AAMC defines “holistic review”: “Holistic Review refers to mission-aligned admissions or selection processes that consider a broad range of factors—experiences, attributes, and academic metrics—when reviewing applications. Holistic review allows admissions committees to consider the ‘whole’ applicant, rather than disproportionately focusing on any one factor.” (Source: AAMC)

In other words, holistic review “is a flexible, individualized way of assessing an applicant’s capabilities” and readiness “by which balanced consideration is given to experiences, attributes, and academic metrics…and, when considered in combination, how the individual might contribute value as a medical student and future physician.” (Source: AAMC)

- Core Competencies defined by the AAMC
- Core Competencies defined by the ADEA
You should apply to medical/dental school/veterinary or other health professions school when you are in the best possible position for potential success – this might look different for each applicant! The Pre-Health Self-Assessment Guide and our office can help guide you through this important decision.

What are some factors in making that decision?
Health professions schools review applications holistically. Some factors that they consider include:

- Cumulative GPA/Science GPA
- Admissions Tests (MCAT, DAT, GRE, etc.)
- Depth of Health-Related Experiences
- Community Service/Advocacy Experiences
- Extracurricular Engagement
- Cultural Competence
- Communication Skills
- Research Experiences

- Professionalism and Integrity
  - Related note: Be aware of your public social media presence.
- Recommendation Letters (and Committee Letter)
- Application Materials (Personal Statements, Etc.)
- The Concept of “Distance Travelled”
- Interview Performance (MMI, panel, one-on-one)
- The Self-Assessment Guide will help you evaluate the elements of your application.
REQUIRED DISCIPLINARY DISCLOSURES

- You must disclose instances of institutional actions, disciplinary actions, conduct/honor code violations, misdemeanors, and felony convictions on your application.
  - If you are applying through the Williams College committee, you are also required to disclose this on the Biographical Report that you will complete for the Health Professions Committee.

- Such instances are considered in the application process by health professions admissions committees. When applying, it is important to demonstrate time, perspective, and growth since.
- Failure to report required information in the admissions process can have serious consequences for your eligibility to matriculate.
- If you have questions about what you are required to report or how to report it, please reach out to our office for guidance.
WHAT IS A COMMITTEE LETTER, AND HOW DO I GET ONE?

“A committee letter is a letter authored by a pre-health committee or pre-health advisor and offers evaluation and advocacy on your behalf by highlighting your background and accomplishments, contextualizing challenges, and outlining your overall preparation and motivation for pursuing a career in medicine. A committee letter is often sent with additional letters of recommendation that you solicit from your faculty and others in support of your candidacy.” (Source: AAMC, “Advisor Corner: Preparing for Committee Letter Process”)

- These types of letters are currently provided for applicants to MD and combined MD programs (i.e. MD-PhD, MD-MPH, etc.), DO programs, and dental school programs. If you are applying for other types of health professions programs, though, remember that we can support your application process in other ways!

- To request a committee letter, you should request to apply through the Williams College Health Professions Committee – the process for which will be outlined next.
The process of preparation by the applicant, Science and Health Professions advisor, faculty evaluators, employers, mentors, supervisors – requires significant investment of dedicated time, focus, and energy.

Robust 18-month-long process with a specific timeline for all required elements and actions.
- Remember, this means that if you’re beginning the process now you will be submitting your application in summer 2020 for matriculation in fall 2021.

Objective is to evaluate readiness and promise of health professions candidates from Williams College in the form of a narrative (committee letter).
- Applicant’s personal story
- Letters of recommendation
- Academic record
- Extracurricular activities
- Relevant clinical and research experiences
- Etc.
The committee is comprised of members of the Science and Health Professions team as well as a rotating combination of at least three additional members (faculty and physicians).

Task is to fairly assess and holistically evaluate each candidate’s file and to provide a comprehensive committee letter.

Committee arrives at final, holistic rating for each candidate. The letter and ratings are confidential.

- Recommended
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent
- Outstanding
HEALTH PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE PROCESS

- Committee review takes place in early-mid May.
- Standardized test scores not included in the assessment, so do not worry if you have not yet taken the test.
- You will be holistically evaluated according to the following:
  - Academic rigor
  - Leadership
  - Community service
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Clinical experience
  - Research experience (clinical, lab-based, public health or community-based)
  - Letters of recommendation
    - TWO of the required recommendation letters should be in your file by April 15, 2020; optimal to have all in by May 15, but June 1 is the final deadline. Remember, we will submit these with your committee letter.*
  - Readiness and preparation to embark on a health professions program

*We will provide your committee letter as well as the veCollect letter “quiver” (your collection of letters of recommendation) to your respective application services (AMCAS, AACOMAS, AADSAS, etc.) – more on this later.
Resume

Biographical Report (Word Document)
- Short answer essays; activities during academic year, spring break trips, winter term, summers; future coursework; GPA calculations
- You describe up to 15 experiences on the Biographical Report and for AMCAS. AADSAS (for dental school applicants) allows for 25 experiences. (Experiences before college should be included only if relevant and continued in college.)

Personal statement draft (incorporated into the Biographical Report)
- This is your narrative, should provide an understanding of why you have chosen this professional path, and is an opportunity to give voice to your application. Focus on something that is distinctive or less prominent in the rest of your application.
- AMCAS: 5,300 characters; TMDSAS (Texas): 5,000 characters
- AACOMAS (DO): 5,300 characters
- ADEA AADSAS (Dental): 4,500 characters
HEALTH PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE CANDIDATE FILE

Transcripts

Our office can download your unofficial Williams transcript.

You must send transcripts of coursework completed elsewhere to us (e.g., courses taken during summers or post-Williams)

You will also have to send transcripts directly to AMCAS/ADEA AADSAS. As you complete the “Schools Attended” section, use the Transcript Request Forms for all schools and programs in which you enrolled when completing the applications.

Williams uses the National Student Clearing House. Order your official Transcript Request Form generated by each application service and send this with the request.

Letters of recommendation

3-5 for MD candidates; 4-6 for MD-PhD candidates; 3-4 dental candidates

3 for veterinary school applicants (but no committee letter)

MUST BE ON LETTERHEAD, SIGNED (electronically/scanned) and DATED
The Health Professions Committee interview will be about two hours long, and can be scheduled with Rebecca Counter or Dr. Marianne DeMarco. This interview will:

- Help inform your committee letter review process and
- Help prepare you for your application submission by:
  - Reviewing your Biographical Report (which is helpful preparation for your application)
  - Reviewing your personal statement draft
  - Providing guidance for your school list (please have a preliminary list ready)

Scheduling instructions will be provided later.
HEALTH PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE PROCESS FOR 2021

- Three required elements before committee interview can be scheduled.
  - Pre-Health Self-Assessment Guide*
  - Resume
  - Biographical Report
    - You will upload these documents to your veCollect account, a virtual filing system that stores your required documents as well as your letters of evaluation. (Note that Williams College will pay for veCollect access.)
- Directions for creating letter records for these documents are linked on the application timeline.

*Note: The Guide is meant to provide an opportunity for self-reflection and to help guide your decision for the timing of your application. It is not used by the Committee.
Create three letter records for each required document that you author *(Pre-Health Assessment Guide, Resume, Biographical Report)* with YOU as the evaluator.

Create evaluator records for all the letters of recommendation (for each individual recommender) and committee letter (Rebecca Counter for committee letter).

After you create these records, you have to select the envelope icon for an automatic email to be sent to you and your recommenders.

The “from” address for the email will look like this: “collect+4575c77f...@virtualevals.org” so be sure to check trash/spam folders, and move the message to your inbox.

The email will contain a link to attach and submit the relevant document.

It may take up to 24 hours for veCollect to upload these documents to your file.
You will enter information for each of your evaluators. There is no hard limit on the number of evaluators you can list on veCollect. However, you should keep three things in mind.

- **Requirements/guidelines** set by your advising office. It is your responsibility to know follow these requirements/guidelines. [click here to see the requirements/guidelines for...]

- It is not appropriate to ask for letters that have a low probability of being used, e.g., do not ask for letters from 8 professors/instructors knowing you will only use 4 of them.

- More is not better. A lukewarm letter from someone who hardly knows you... **Click to Read More**

Mr. Edward Eph (Other)

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IF YOU PLAN TO APPLY FOR 2021 MATRICULATION

- First Step: Intent to Apply Form – Google Form that you complete and submit before January 15. The form is available through our website and will open on Wednesday, December 18.
  - After February 1, you need to request special permission to apply through the Committee.
  - Submission of the form indicates that you plan to apply, and also allows us to authorize your veCollect account.
IF YOU PLAN TO APPLY FOR 2021 MATRICULATION

- Continue to organize and prepare —
  - Keep up-to-date on Committee deadlines
  - Think carefully about evaluators and ask them in a timely, polite manner
  - Maintain your academic/work obligations, gain practical (hands-on) experience
  - If possible, gain research experience with results and a product (thesis, poster, article)
  - Hone your interpersonal skills: teamwork, cultural competence, leadership skills
- READ and BE INFORMED about health care and other topics (emergent diseases, end-of-life care, population medicine, substance abuse, social justice…).
  - Literature of medicine is particularly rich: Humanities and Medicine programs at many medical schools.
- PLAN TO APPLY EARLY. AADSAS opened in May 2019! All other applications open around June 1.
- Have BACK-UP PLANS. There are no guarantees.
# DEADLINES FOR 2021 APPLICANTS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 15, 2020</td>
<td>Intent to Apply Form, Open veCollect Account</td>
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<td>January 31, 2020</td>
<td>Start on Evaluator Records; Request Outside Transcripts</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 14, 2020</td>
<td>Submit Pre-Health Self-Assessment Guide and Resume</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 28, 2020</td>
<td>Submit Biographical Report (Personal Statement draft included)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March-April 2020</td>
<td>Interview Scheduling with Rebecca Counter and Marianne DeMarco</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15, 2020</td>
<td>Two letters of recommendation must be in veCollect</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1, 2020</td>
<td>Your candidate file must be complete for Committee review. Prepare your relevant applications.</td>
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A FEW MORE REMINDERS

- Filling out the AMCAS/AACOMAS/AADSAS/VMCAS/TMDSAS requires careful reading of the instructions. Be sure to review their respective applicant guides.

- The Williams guidelines for converting course units have changed. This will be important when completing the coursework section of your application.
  - All courses are 3.75 semester hours, and for every associated one hour of lab, an additional .25 semester hours is added. Biology and physics lab courses are 4.5 hours, and chemistry lab courses are 4.8 semester hours.
  - Winter study classes are given 1 credit and no semester hours.
  - AMCAS/VMCAS/AACOMAS will manually make those semester hour changes after you submit. So you list “1” in credit hour column.

- Review our website for further information, and be sure to check out our FAQs.
OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT

- We are here to provide you with ongoing support throughout this entire process – from your initial interest in applying through your eventual matriculation!
- Communication is vital to the process. The Science and Health Professions team will provide you with general guidance and individualized advising throughout this process, but it is critical that you take initiative as well.
- How best to communicate with Health Professions Staff
  - Email any time
  - Schedule appointments in Handshake or via email
- Application Timeline is the guide for the process.
- More information will be provided via email as the year progresses.
QUESTIONS?

Please feel free to reach out to Rebecca Counter (rc11@williams.edu) or Allisa Miller anm2@williams.edu with any questions that you might have throughout the cycle.
REFERENCES

- AAMC, “The Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students”: <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies/>
- ADEA, “Competencies for the New General Dentist”: <https://www.adea.org/about_adea/governance/Pages/Competencies-for-the-New-General-Dentist.aspx>