MSPA Queer Pre-Med Panel

Topic: What will you be evaluated on in your application:

* Exposure to medicine:
  + What do you want to be as a doctor?
  + How do you envision the kind of doctor you want to be?
  + What have you done to identify the kind of doctor you want to be?
* Research:
  + It is more important to have longitudinal commitments than multiple short-term opportunities.
  + It’s great if you have a publication but is not necessary.
  + If you have a good relationship with your PI ask them for a letter of recommendation. You want someone who can really speak for you.
* Service:
  + It is more important to have longitudinal commitments than multiple short-term opportunities.
  + Take advantage of opportunities to be in leadership positions.
  + ADCOMS are starting to better understand the need to work.
* Leadership:
  + It is more important to have longitudinal commitments than multiple short-term opportunities.
  + Leadership can come from multiple different categories (ie: being a Resident Assistant is both a job and leadership).
* Academics/Testing:
  + Typically an unofficial MCAT cut off is 500.
  + GPA: If you have a low GPA, aim to have an upward trend.
  + The cut offs for each school will vary.
* Character:
  + What makes you, you?
  + How do you and your mission with in medicine?
  + This will come through in personal statements, letter of recommendations, and the interview.

Application:

* Proofread everything.
* Use the MSAR site to explore programs.
* Typically aim to apply to 15-20 schools.
* Cost:
  + The first primary application will cost $170 and then $39 for each primary afterwards.
  + Secondaries range from $50-$200 and costs are set by the school.
    - Some schools will have secondary fee waivers for URiM students. Consider asking.
* Experience section:
  + There are 15 spots, you don’t have to fill out all 15.
  + Get your hours right. Don’t lie and put more hours but also don’t undersell yourself.
  + Mix up your experiences.
  + Regarding hobbies, consider adding it to your list if it adds to your character. (i.e.: A student interested in yoga and meditation)
* Personal Statement:
  + Do not regurgitate your experiences section or your resume.
  + Find a way to make this attention grabbing, tell us your story that answers “why medicine?”

Secondaries:

* This is a section where students will typically decide to out themselves, be careful if this is not something you want to do.
* These allow the schools to get a deeper dive of who you are.
* Have a good reason for “why our school?”
* In writing about obstacles you have overcome or explaining a “red flag” in your application, do not defer blame to someone else.

Interview:

* By the time an interview comes, a school is looking to see if you are a good fit for the schools. They are looking for drive, motivation, leadership skills, and how you deal with curveball questions.
* This is a great time to get questions about the school answers. Think about questions you want to ask before you are in the interview.
* Be respectful.
* Don’t look at your phone during the interview.
* In the era of Zoom Interviews, you need to give 110% percent so that it can convey over camera.
  + Pro example: A student brought pictures to show during their Zoom Interview to show what they have done.
* MMI:
  + Be ready for whatever to be thrown at you.
  + We are looking for how you are thinking and how you communicate.
  + It is okay to not fill the time. People tend to want to keep talking after they have made their point, it is okay to stop talking.
  + Say what you need to say, present balanced and critical thinking.
  + It can be a nerve wrecking process.
  + Don’t feel like you need to immediately jump into an answer.
  + If you have a bad MMI, don’t overthink it. Don’t let 1 bad MMI ruin the remaining 6-8, one bad MMI won’t ruin your chances.
  + Don’t overthink your answers.
* Remote Platform: you have to show that you are engaged! Be 110% on Zoom! Someone brought in pictures to show what they have done.
* Jessica Halem Tip (summarized):
* I don’t care if you are out on your application, I care that you have figured it out for yourself. What matters is your own personal story; what matters is your confidence! Every “grown up” reading applications from queer students is thinking “Are they okay?” and “ Are you going to be able to handle this?”. ADCOMS have heard the disparities regarding the disparities queer people and they don’t want to worry about you. You need to show them that you are strong, confident, and are ready to advocate on behalf of patients, ready to take care of yourself, and ready to be a part of a team.

The Queer Agenda:

Tips:

* Find the mission of the school. Apply to schools that match your ideals and your mission.
* In your secondaries, link your stories and activities to the mission and ideals of the school.
* Tips on navigating name changes *(Possible point to write to)*
  + This depends on when you change your name in the application cycle (before, during, or after you have applied).
  + Reach out to AMCAS and schools.
  + Personal story (summarized): I had a friend transition after they had send in their application. They notified the schools they applied to and then at interviews they saw that their ID badge had their chosen name.
  + Jessica Halem Tip (summarized): You are a pre-med student and you still have to live your life. We need you to go into medical school. You know more about your bodies than anyone else. “Take a deep breath and barrel your way through and think you could be the person that you needed earlier.” Go to medical school and be a confident doctor. There is no one way to be a LGBTQ doctor, you just got to get through it.
* How “out” you are is entirely your choice. There is no one way to be LGBTQ+ medical student or doctor. You will find your passion and how much you want to be out. *(Possible point to write to)*
* Things to consider about being “out” during your interviewing and on your application.
* One perspective (summarized) : There are obvious risks that someone on the ADCOM will be biased against you, but it raises the question why would you want to be in a school or environment that you weren’t comfortable or safe in?
* One perspective (summarized): I didn’t care if I was the only one, I wanted to be in medical school.

Mentors + Queer Health (*Possibly a point to write to)*

* Each school is going to be different in how far along they are in educating about Queer Health. In schools without a lot of Queer Health, there is the space to do work and it is up to students like us to advocate for it.

Navigating Disadvantaged Question:

* Be careful what you put here when you check this box.

Adversity and Diversity Questions (in secondaries)

* Regarding underrepresented in medicine status, AAMC has specific guidelines on these.
* This also a time to describe your commitment to diversity and inclusion. They are looking to create a class. Make it clear of your commitments. Yes I am a candidate with a diverse experience AND I am committed to working in a diverse environment.
* Think of your application as a puzzle, you want to make sure you have a complete picture.

Fee Assistance from AMCAS: You will need your FASFA with your parents information. For schools, this varies.

Doing an MPH looks nice and if you want that go for it. But if you need to boost your science GPA it would be better to get a MSc or do a post-bacc program.