Applications for the 2014 Medical School admissions cycle became available last May and began being accepted in June. As of October, 17 seniors and 16 alumni have submitted applications to both Allopathic and Osteopathic medical schools.

There are two different online application services that are used by medical schools. AMCAS is a product of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and is used by most Allopathic Medical Schools. For Osteopathic Medical Schools, the system is called ACOMAS.

Both application services require students to enter all of their academic information, which is then verified by official transcripts, and also provide details about their various experiences—both clinical and non-clinical. The Committee Letter, Faculty Evaluations and other Letters of Recommendation are uploaded into the system by the Director of Pre-Professional Advising via VirtualEvals.

Another important piece of the application is the Personal Statement. This is the students’ chance to talk about what is most important to them, what drives them, and why they want to be physicians. It should be well-written and error-free.

The last piece of data, and probably one of the most important, is the MCAT score. Everything should be reviewed thoroughly before the final submission, and afterwards a copy was sent to Cailin Pachter at cpachter@muhlenberg.edu so she could compile the Committee Letter.

Medical School Interviews

A number of the students who applied to medical school this summer have already been on interviews. Here’s what one of them had to say:

“So far my interview experiences have been great! I was initially very nervous, because I wasn’t sure of what to expect. Once I got to my first interview, I immediately felt much better and I loosened up. Interviewers want to get to know the applicant as a person to see if she is as good in person as on paper. Getting an interview in the first place means that the school is interested in you, so that alone is something to celebrate about. Specifically with this application cycle, I advise everyone to research the Affordable Care Act. The medical schools want to make sure that you know what is happening in the world of medicine, so don’t be surprised if an interviewer asks for your opinion on the Affordable Care Act. So far I’m really enjoying traveling to all the schools and getting to see new places and meet new people. My interviewers have all been really cool too, and I’ve loved learning about their backgrounds as well.”

- Cimmaron Sharon ’14

Students preparing for interviews can practice their skills with a counselor in The Career Center.

Did you know?

Nationwide, only about 45% of medical school applicants are accepted each year?
The Reality of Medical School Debt

According to the AAMC, the total cost of four years of medical education for students graduating in 2013 is well over $200,000. Many of these students already had debt from their undergraduate educations. Grants and scholarships rarely cover the entire cost of attending medical school. Although private schools offer more in grants and scholarships than public schools, their total cost of attendance is also higher. Debt levels for indebted medical school graduates have been rising faster than inflation over the last 20 years. Interestingly, the amount of debt a graduate has incurred does not appear to impact the choice of specialty.

It’s not all bad news, however. There are options available to students that will provide help. The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) awards scholarships to students pursuing primary health care professions training in NHSC-eligible disciplines in return for a commitment to provide health care to communities in need, upon graduation and the completion of training. Another option is the Health Professions Scholarship Program through the military. Qualifying students receive full tuition for any accredited medical, dental, veterinary, psychology or optometry program, plus a generous monthly stipend of more than $2,000. Finally, there are income-based repayment options available as well as forbearance during residency.

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Ramzy Burns ’14 (Pre-Med)

Ramzy Burns is a senior biochemistry major planning to attend medical school next fall. This past summer she participated in research at Penn State Hershey Medical Center in the Institute for Personalized Medicine.

“My lab focused on sequencing the DNA of patients with ALS to search for variants that could be used to better understand ALS disease progression. Specifically, I screened patients for a mutation that has been linked to slowly progressing ALS. I had a great time in Dr. Gerhard’s lab and had the opportunity to learn a lot about how sequencing is personalizing the field of medicine.”

Lehigh Valley Law Day

Every other year, Muhlenberg hosts a law fair that is open to all of the Lehigh Valley colleges (Lehigh University hosts on the alternate years). On Thursday, October 31st, over 20 law schools from New England and the Mid-Atlantic region (and as far away as Georgia) will be at Muhlenberg to talk with students who are interested in a legal career. The event will take place in the Event Space in Seegers Union from 4-6pm. Students from all class years are invited to attend.
Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP)

On Thursday, October 10th, SFC Bernacki and SSG DiGangi spoke to a group of students about the Army’s Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP). Through this scholarship, students not only have their medical school tuition covered, but also receive a monthly stipend. Qualifying medical and dental students are also eligible to receive a $20,000 sign-on bonus.

Scholarship selectees are commissioned as second lieutenants and are placed in the inactive reserve for the duration of their medical training. Upon graduating from medical school, these officers are promoted directly to Captain, placed on active duty for the duration of their residencies, and receive a salary commensurate with their rank. The incurred service obligation is generally one-for-one for every service-paid year of schooling, with a minimum of two years for physicians and three years for other specialties. Additional time required for certain postgraduate programs, such as lengthy residencies, can result in longer service obligations.

So far this year, two Muhlenberg seniors have applied for the program. When asked what inspired him, Alex Jenkins ’14 said, “I wanted the freedom to someday choose whatever specialty I want and not have to worry about paying off hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt, but above all, I would be honored to have the opportunity to provide medical care for the bravest men and women in the world.”

I was initially intrigued by the opportunity to give back to my country while pursuing my passion as a medical professional, rather than on the front lines. After further investigation into the program, it really seems that the HPSP prepares its students better than civilian courses for their future careers (statistically speaking). The most outstanding perk of this program is the ability to leave medical school and residency debt-free.

- Zachary Rubin ’14

Muhlenberg Alumni from Local Firm Speak to Pre-Law Students

Contributed by Melissa Reitberg ’14

On October 8, I attended a common hour pre-law panel where representatives Gretchen L. Geisser ’08, Marie K. McConnell ’05, Jacob M. Sitman ’94, and Douglas J. Smillie ’78 from Fitzpatrick Lentz & Bubba, Attorneys at Law, spoke about their experiences graduating Muhlenberg to pursue careers in law.

I learned that contrary to what I have previously been told, lawyers can be successful without an Ivy League education. Law schools may have positive regional reputations which may be beneficial when applying for jobs at firms local to the law school. For this reason, I began to look at schools in parts of the country where I could picture myself practicing a career. I discovered that some of these schools offer a fee waiver for applying before a certain date. This gave me incentive to spend my fall break applying to schools.

While I did not immediately consult with the lawyers who presented at the panel, I added them on LinkedIn and they all were remarkably eager to lend advice into the application process and perhaps, more importantly, made me aware that they are available to answer questions about a career in law so that I may assess if law school is right for me. Marie K. McConnell remembered our one-on-one conversation from the panel event and my specific areas of interest and possible career path. Gretchen L. Geisser heads a “shadow” program at their firm; students who are considering a career in law are offered the option to attend the firm and “shadow” a lawyer in his/her work for the day. I look forward to hearing back from schools and possibly taking advantage of the “shadow” program.

What to do during Winter Break ...
Where Were They Accepted?

Muhlenberg students and alumni were accepted to the following law schools last year:

(** Where they decided to attend)

- The University of Akron School of Law
- ** American Univ. Washington College of Law
- Ave Maria School of Law
- ** University of Baltimore School of Law
- Barry University – Dwayne Andreas School of Law
- ** Brooklyn Law School
- University of California at Los Angeles
- California Western School of Law
- The Catholic University of America
- Charlotte School of Law
- ** City University of New York School of Law
- University of Connecticut School of Law
- Cornell Law School
- University of Denver Sturm College of Law
- Earle Mack School of Law, Drexel University
- ** Emory University School of Law
- Florida Coastal School of Law
- Fordham University School of Law
- ** George Washington University Law School
- Gonzaga University School of Law
- ** Hofstra University School of Law
- Lewis and Clark Law School
- Loyola University Chicago School of Law
- University of Massachusetts School of Law - Dartmouth
- ** University of Miami School of Law
- The University of Michigan Law School
- Mississippi College School of Law
- New England Law - Boston
- University of New Hampshire School of Law
- ** New York Law
- New York University School of Law
- University of North Carolina
- Northeastern University School of Law
- Notre Dame Law School
- ** University of Oregon School of Law
- Pace University School of Law
- The Pennsylvania State University, Dickinson School of Law
- University of Pittsburgh School of Law
- ** Quinnipiac University School of Law
- Rutgers University School of Law - Newark
- ** Rutgers – The State University of New Jersey (Camden)
- St. Johns University School of Law
- University of San Diego School of Law
- ** Seton Hall University School of Law
- University of Southern California Law School
- Southern Illinois University School of Law
- Stetson University College of Law
- Suffolk University Law School
- ** Syracuse University College of Law
- ** Temple University
- The University of Texas School of Law
- The University of Toledo College of Law
- Touro College, Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center
- University of Utah
- ** Vanderbilt University Law School
- ** Vermont Law School
- ** Villanova University School of Law
- ** Widener University School of Law

Like Us on Facebook
Pre-Law at Muhlenberg and Pre-Health at Muhlenberg

Who Was Here?  Who Is Coming?

Visitors
- Thomas Jefferson University
- US Army - HPSP
- SUNY College of Optometry
- NY College of Podiatric Medicine
- Simmons College—DPT Program

Past Events
- Kaplan - MCAT Preview Class
- Interview Workshop for Seniors
- Sophomore Self-Assessment
- Freshman Meeting
- Lehigh Valley Law Day

Upcoming
- Lecture from Seton Hall Law Professor John Jacobi
- Application Advantage Workshop for Medical and Dental School applicants—2015 cycle