

Pre-Health Professions Studies

The success of a liberal arts college in preparing its graduates for both the study and the practice of medicine can be measured by the admissions rate of its graduates to medical schools and by the quality of its overall undergraduate education.

Medical school admission rates are presented in different formats by different colleges. Some colleges present statistics that include only first time applicants or only seniors while other colleges do not include those students whom the college does not endorse as candidates. In making comparisons between colleges, it is essential to know the basis of a college's reporting method.

Oberlin bases its reported admission rate on the admit record on all of its graduates who were accepted on the first try or subsequently reapplied. During the last five years, 90% have gained admission.

The reasons for this high level of success are several;

1. The departments in the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics - Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geology, Mathematics, Physics, and Neuroscience - are particularly strong at Oberlin. These departments are a testimony to Oberlin's long-held belief that the best liberal arts education has a strong science component and that the best science education occurs in a liberal arts environment.

2. At Oberlin, the sciences are well supported by grants from federal and other agencies. Since 1991, individual faculty in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics have received 97 competitively awarded grants totaling \$5,905,532 for research, instrumentation and curriculum development. Sources of the grants include the National Sciences Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the National Geographic Society, the American Cancer Society, Research Corporation, the Petroleum Research Fund of the American Cancer Society, the Camille and Henry Dreyfus Foundation, and the Deafness Research Foundation. In addition, since 1991, interdisciplinary grants totaling \$4 million to support science teaching has been received from the Keck, GAR, Howard Hughes Medical, National Science Foundation, and 14 other foundations.

3. Oberlin's program in the sciences has been substantially augmented and enhanced by the Oberlin College Science Center, which - in addition to providing all

contemporary instruments and appointments - contains special facilities to fully support student and faculty research opportunities. Everything is interconnected, promoting communication across disciplines and collaborative research relationships for which Oberlin is so well-known.

4. Oberlin has on staff a Chief Health Professions Advisor whose task is to advise and advocate for pre-professional students, assisting them in building a broad and strong academic program and in preparing applications to appropriate medical schools.

Because of the overall strength of Oberlin's curriculum in the liberal arts and sciences, a student can become an intellectually and personally well-rounded medical school applicant.

Many academic majors provide a successful route to medical school. From Oberlin, 25% of the students recently accepted to medical schools have had non-science majors only and 49% completed dual majors in a science and a non-science major compared to less than 25% nationally. "Pre-Med" students are not labeled as such, are not isolated academically from other students and have full access to all honors and summer research opportunities.

Academic majors of Medical School applicants accepted in the period 2001-2004.

Biology	33	Neuroscience	19
Biochemistry	8	Chemistry	4
English	2	History	2
Psychology	5	Religion	3
Anthropology	1	Art	1
Politics	2	East Asian Studies	3
Economics	1	Music	4
German	2	Sociology	2
Others	5		

Oberlin also provides opportunities for the pre-medical student to acquire the practical knowledge and skills needed to be a strong medical school applicant and eventually a successful practitioner.

The Oberlin College Health Career Externship Program matches students with Oberlin graduates in the medical professions for observation and conversations during the fall or spring recess or during the Winter Term.

The Oberlin College Center for Service and Learning provides numerous opportunities for students to engage in volunteer work at free clinics, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, and other service and health care agencies.

The Oberlin College Office of Career Services provides assistance in finding paid summer internships, fellowships, and jobs in biomedical research and in human service organizations.

117 Oberlin alumni currently serve on the faculty of over 60 medical schools. Among the many Oberlin graduates who have made remarkable contributions to medicine is Donald Henderson '50, former Dean of Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and head of World Health Organization's successful world-wide effort to eradicate small pox. Billy Cohen '82 is a cardiothoracic surgeon, featured in a 1999 New Yorker article, who invented and perfected a life-saving procedure for heart surgery without putting patients on bypass.

Oberlin also successfully prepares its graduates for admission to schools of osteopathic medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, nursing, physical therapy, and many other health professions.

We asked six recent Oberlin graduates to reflect on their pre-medical work at Oberlin:

"The most impressive aspect of the pre-medical program at Oberlin is that it isn't so structured that you feel you're in a pre-medical program," says Brian Donoghue (University of Illinois College of Medicine at Urbana and Rockford). "There is tremendous support from health professions advisors and the classes prepared me very well. You really have plenty of opportunity to get to know the professors."

Ben Sanders (University of North Carolina School of Medicine) observed, "The use of essay examinations throughout the college, including in the natural sciences, encouraged me to synthesize and communicate far better than multiple choice examinations. The professors take the time to check thoroughly our responses. This personal attention inspires us to become creators and thinkers instead of mindlessly spewing out rote answers."

Catherine Livingston (Harvard Medical School) said, "My interest in international women's health prompted me to create an individual major that included not only biology but also socio-cultural, economic, and political aspects. My self-designed major allowed me to develop as a unique individual while maintaining a clear focus on my career goals."

Anil Kesavan (University of Illinois Medical School at Champaign and Peoria) said, "My pre-med experience at Oberlin College has been vastly different from that of my friends at other colleges. The non-competitive learning environment fostered at Oberlin is incredible. I took many courses purely because of intellectual curiosity. Oberlin encouraged me to be a well-rounded individual."

Christiana Nwofor (Harvard Medical School) praised Oberlin's faculty for not simply releasing "tons of information to the wind and hope that, like pollen, it lands on the fertile minds of some attentive students. Oberlin College professors went out of their way to help me learn through one-on-one tutoring and by recruiting me to do research with them."

Megan McKinnon (Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis) noted that as a residential college Oberlin helped her form friendships with many students majoring in all disciplines. These friendships led to long discussions about subjects ranging from art and religion to in vitro fertilization and genetic engineering. Discussions on cross-disciplinary topics were especially valuable because "they allowed me to compare my knowledge and perspectives with others who had radically different views. At Oberlin I was a varsity swimmer and diver for four years. Oberlin really acknowledges the importance of staying physically fit while studying hard. I appreciate that professors made allowances for my occasional absences from class and laboratories so I could compete in a competitive athletic program. My coaches and teammates also understood that academics came first for me."

For further information about pre-medical preparation at Oberlin, please contact:

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During the four year period (2001-2004), Oberlin applicants were admitted to the following 61 M.D.- granting medical schools:

Albert Einstein
Boston University
California - San Diego
California - San Francisco
Case Western Reserve
Chicago - Pritzker
Chicago Medical
Cincinnati
Columbia
Connecticut
Cornell
Duke
Emory
George Washington
Georgetown
Harvard
Illinois
Iowa
Jefferson
Johns Hopkins
Maryland
Massachusetts
MCP - Hahnemann
Medical College of Ohio
Michigan - Ann Arbor
Minnesota - Minneapolis
Missouri - Columbia
Morehouse
Mount Sinai

New York Medical
North Carolina
NYU
Ohio State
Oregon
Penn State
Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh
Rochester
Rush
St. Louis University
Stanford
SUNY - Brooklyn
SUNY - Buffalo
SUNY - Syracuse
Temple
Tufts
Tulane
UMDNJ - NJ
Uniformed Services
Vermont
Virginia - Eastern
Virginia - Medical College
Washington - Seattle
West Virginia - Marshall
West Virginia - University of
Wisconsin - Madison
Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Wright State - Ohio
Yale

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