Mock Interviews
University of Arizona
College of Medicine - Phoenix

Dr. Lisa Shah-Patel
Dr. Lauren Fisher
Dr. David Guttman
Dr. Eric vanSonnenberg
Program Director Survey

• Top ranking criteria:
  – 96% Interactions with faculty during interview/visit
  – 95% Interpersonal skills
  – 91% Interactions with housestaff during interview/visit
  – 86% Feedback from current residents

NRMP Program Director Survey, 2018
Preparation

- Know yourself
  - Be comfortable telling your own story
  - Know your application
  - Why you chose your specialty
  - Qualities and skills you bring
  - Expectations, educational and professional goals
Preparation

• Do your homework
  – The more informed you are, the more insightful the questions you can ask during the interview
    • Research programs using their website, contacts, and pre-interview materials
    • Know the history of your specialty and pioneers in the field
    • Be knowledgeable of current events in your chosen specialty
Preparation

• Prepare to answer common questions
  – You’ll impress interviewers if thoughtful, insightful, and concise responses roll off your tongue
  • “Tell me about yourself”
  • “Why do you want to go into this specialty?”
  • “Why do you want to come to our program?”
Preparation

• Prepare a list of questions
  – Develop questions that will help you collect the information you need to make a good decision
  – Interviewers may defer the direction of the interview to you; take the reins with confidence
Preparation

• Prepare a patient case
  – Particularly memorable, challenging or educational
  – If asked, present the patient in about 30s – 45s
  – Relate the highlights
  – Conclude with what you learned
The Interview Day

• **Duration:** ½ - full day

• **Format:**
  – Presentation by the program director
  – Opportunity to go on rounds
  – Hospital tour
  – Lunch (frequently with current residents)
  – Individual interviews with faculty and director

• **Reception or other social outing**
The Interview Day

• Wear comfortable shoes
• Arrive early
  – Nothing’s more stressful than trying to find a parking spot, getting lost or stuck in traffic
The Interview Day

• Be cordial and respectful to everyone
  – The whole experience is an interview
    • Especially the evening social event
  – Interactions with the program coordinator
  – Even finding a parking space…
The Interview Day

• Be enthusiastic and show interest
  – If you have done your research and are truly interested, this should be easy
  – As you travel the interview trail, enthusiasm is frequently half the battle
  – Remain positive and upbeat
The Interview Day

- Commonly asked questions by Program Directors:
  - How did you become interested in our program?
  - What are you looking for in a program?
  - Where do you see yourself in 5-10 years?
  - Tell me about yourself.
  - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
  - What do you do with your spare time?
  - Tell me about your research.
  - Why should we take you over other candidates?
  - What are you looking for in a program?
  - Why did you choose medicine as a career?

Ref: https://www.aamc.org/download/77936/data/residencyquestions.pdf
The Interview Day

• Good questions for students to ask PD/faculty:
  – Where do graduates end up: geographically and types of jobs?
  – What program changes have been made in recent years?
  – What changes are anticipated in the near future?
  – What are some of the major research interests within the department?
  – What role do private physicians have in the residency training process?
  – What role do fellows have in the residency training process?
  – What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the program?
  – How percentage of time is devoted to lectures and other didactics?
  – How do your graduates do on specialty board exams?
  – What percent of residents go on to fellowships? Which fellowships
  – Do residents have any difficulty landing the fellowship of their choice?
The Interview Day

• Good questions for students to ask residents:
  – What is the best part of your residency?
  – Are you happy with your decision to come here?
  – Tell me about the lectures, simulations, didactics, journal club.
  – Other requirements: research, administrative, built in moonlighting, etc?
  – What is the most frustrating part of your residency?
  – Do you operate with attendings on every case?
  – How is call? How much call?
  – How is the cost of living?
  – Electives experience? Can you do away electives?
  – Inpatient versus outpatient experiences?
The Interview Day

• Address weaknesses in your application
  – Control the conversation
    • Low board scores
    • Leave of absence
    • Delayed graduation
  – and then highlight your strengths
    • Showcase your clinical problem solving abilities
    • Talk about a particularly meaningful patient interaction

– If you have questions about this, please contact your advisor.
After the Interview

• Keeping everything straight
  – Notes of pros & cons, who you met, feelings you had
    • Be honest with yourself and what you like and don’t like
    • Is this a place where you will thrive?
  – Keep business cards and information packets
  – Write about common/personal things you talked about with PDs/interviewers
    • Great to have when doing thank you notes and jog interviewers memory of you
Resources

• Alumni Advisor List/Mentorship Program
• HOST program (Help Our Students Travel)
  – 100+ alumni willing to house students
Resources

- Airline Loyalty Card
- Smart trip planning for the UofA
  - [https://tool.thehotelsnearby.com/UACOM1](https://tool.thehotelsnearby.com/UACOM1)
- Puffin app ERAS accessibility via smartphone
- Consider family member or best friend access to email to accept interviews
Big Sib Program

• Who better to ask, someone who just went through it
• Answer questions/concerns and provide guidance to a third year medical student who will be soon starting the fourth year process
  • How do I sort through VSAS, ERAS, NRMP?
  • Provide firsthand experience
  • Provide guidance about the application process, LORs, VSAS and away rotation
• Sign up tonight!!!
Summary

• Be comfortable telling your story
• Show enthusiasm
• Remember, you’re interviewing the program too
  – Which program is the best fit for you?
  – Where will you thrive?
Tonight

• 2 groups A and B
  – A heads to the doctoring suites on the 3rd floor
  – B stays here in B202 for the roundtable discussion

– Please listen to prompts for the interviewing component; have student wait outside and knock when prompt indicates
  • You may not be interviewed by someone in your specialty
  • Ask questions of your interviewer
– You will be prompted when the interview ends and the feedback portion should begin
  • Please utilize provided feedback forms

Thank you again to our volunteer faculty!!!