The Virtual Interview

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Career and Professional Advising
The University of Arizona
College of Medicine – Phoenix
October 21, 2020
Evening Agenda

• 5:30pm – 5:50pm  PowerPoint
  – Dr. David Guttman

• 5:50pm – 6:00pm  Introductions
  – Dr. Shah-Patel

• 6:00pm – 6:55pm  Panel Discussion
  – Dr. Andrea Waxman (Psychiatry)  Dr. Dan Gridley (Radiology)
  – Dr. Jennifer Preston (General Surgery)  Dr. Mary Connell (Radiology)
  – Dr. Steven Brown (Family Medicine)  Dr. Vasu Bhavaraju (Pediatrics)

• 7:00pm – 8:10pm  1:1 Interviews
  – All students and faculty volunteers (you will automatically be moved into individual breakout rooms)

• 8:10pm – 8:30pm  Student & Advisor Debrief
  – All students and Career Advisors present. (Faculty excused)
Virtual Interview

• AAMC Statement 2020
  – Encourages interviews conducted virtually
    • Phone or video conferencing
• Transition
  – Many residency programs in all specialties are moving from in-person interviews to virtual ones
Preparation

• Take control of the environment
  – Scheduling
  – Hardware & Software
  – Location
  – Lighting
  – Noise
  – Attire
Preparation

• Scheduling
  – Date & time of interview
    • Time zone considerations therefore need to confirm
  – Expected length of interview

  – You should not be booking multiple interviews from different locations on the same day
Preparation

• Verify software or application platform
  – Download most update version
  – Verify username requirements
    • Create professional username
  – Verify profile photo requirements
    • Create professional look
  – Test & familiarize
    • Log in
    • Microphone & video camera
    • Reliable internet connection
    • Backup device
    • Device fully charged or plug available
Preparation

• Location
  – Free of distraction and interruptions
  – Background conservative and tidy

• Lighting
  – Eliminate shadows and properly illuminate
  – Light from above and in front of you

• Noise/Echoes
  – Avoid distracting noises in your environment
  – Children, pets, roommates, etc.
  – Large rooms may create echoes
Preparation

• Eye contact
  – Webcam should be at eye level; maintain eye contact at that location

• Body language
  – sit up straight
  – hand motions
  – swivel chair

• Attire
  – Professional dress
  – Head to toe
  – Avoid busy prints or patterns that wash out on video
  – Solid and brighter colors appear best on screen
  – Avoid flashy jewelry and reflective eyewear
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
    • Pioneers in the field
    • Be knowledgeable of current events
Preparation

• If the program has sent you information prior to interview day, make sure you look at it
• Research those who will be interviewing you if you have this information
• Keep record of who these individuals are, contact information, and who program coordinator is
  – (after your fifth interview this will all blend together)
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 patient case or two
  – Particularly memorable, challenging or educational
  – If asked, present the patient in about 30s – 45s
  – Relate the highlights
  – Conclude with what you learned
Preparation

• Practice, practice, practice
  – Rehearse with a friend, mentor and your Advisor
  – Practice on same device and in same location
  – Record the video and review yourself or send to someone for feedback
    • Listen to your tone, pace and volume
    • Are you smiling?
    • Do you focus on the camera with good eye contact?
    • Are you fidgeting?
    • How is the video and audio quality?
    • Is your face well illuminated?
    • Is the background distracting?
Preparation

• Prepare a list of questions
  – Develop questions that will help you collect the information you need to make a good decision
  – Make sure these questions are appropriate for who you are asking
    • Don’t ask the PD questions about vacation
    • Ask the residents about didactic time, family time etc.
  – Interviewers may defer the direction of the interview to you; take the reins with confidence
The Interview Day

• Check your equipment
  – Test internet connection
  – Close any additional open applications
  – Silence notifications
  – Disable pop-ups
  – Turn off phone
  – Log in 20 minutes beforehand
The Interview Day

• Make good eye contact
  – Imagine the interviewer is sitting right behind the camera

• Body language
  – Sit up straight
  – Pay attention to posture
  – Demonstrate interest and enthusiasm
  – Smile and project warm and confident demeanor

• Speaking
  – Allow for time to interviewer to finish their question
  – Speak louder and articulate more than usual; ask interviewer if they can hear you appropriately
The Interview Day

5 TOP ONLINE INTERVIEW TIPS

Make an Impression from a Distance

- Look directly into the camera and not at the screen or monitor to make good eye contact.
- Don't be afraid to ask for a question to be repeated if you have not heard it properly. It is better to clarify.
- The sound system can be less than perfect so speak clearly and avoid mumbling or rushing your words.
- Be aware of your facial expressions and posture - they are a large part of your message online.
- Pause before answering a question to be sure the interviewer has finished speaking.
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?
  – What have you been doing recently during this time of the pandemic?
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?
  – What has kept you at this institution/program?
• 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 and what you learned from it
  – 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
The Interview Day

• At the conclusion of the interview
  – Concisely reiterate interest and your fit
  – Thank the interviewer
  – Properly close and exit out of software
After the Interview

• Keeping everything straight
  – Notes pros & cons, your interviewers, feelings, etc.
    • Be honest with yourself and what you like and don’t like
    • Is this a place where you will thrive?
  – 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

• Consider using Residency Program Evaluation Guide
Summary

• Prepare your technology, environment, questions and interview skills
• Be comfortable telling your story
• Smile and demonstrate enthusiasm
• Remember, you’re interviewing the program too
  – Which program is the best fit for you?
  – Where will you thrive?
Resources

• AAMC Virtual Interviews: Applicant Preparation Guide

• AAMC Best Practices: Conducting Residency Program Interviews

• www.aamc.org/download/77936/data/residencyquestions.pdf

• https://www.aamc.org/cim/residency/application/interviewing/