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Introduction

A decision to pursue a career in the health professions requires careful preparation and self-evaluation. The staff of the Health Professions Advising Office in the Honors College is available to assist you.

This booklet is designed to provide helpful information for those MU students contemplating a career in:

- · Allopathic and Osteopathic medicine
- Dentistry
- Optometry
- Podiatry
- Pharmacy

While the focus is primarily on the pre-medical student, much of the information in this booklet is applicable to all of the professional programs listed above. This booklet is not meant for students pursuing careers in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, or nursing. Those students should consult with MU's School of Health Professions (573-882-8013) or School of Nursing (573-882-0277) for information and guidance.

We hope that you find this booklet useful as you progress toward your goal of obtaining a seat in the professional school of your choice. Please keep in mind that this booklet is meant only as a guide and is not intended to provide a definitive source of information about the health professions and the process of applying to a professional school. You are encouraged to use other sources of information available at the Honors College and on the Internet. You should consult with your academic advisor as well as your health professions advisor to tailor the process to your personal needs and goals.

Preprofessional and Student Services

The health professions advisors in the Honors College provide a variety of services that include, but are not limited to the following. They provide:

- · Advice on course selection (in conjunction with your academic advisor)
- Information on professional schools' admissions tests
- Guidance in making application to professional schools
- Guidance about letters of recommendation/evaluation
- A committee composite letter of evaluation (for eligible students)
- Information on post-baccalaureate programs
- Information on summer internship opportunities
- · Referrals to other university resources

Health Professions advisors are available by appointment to assist students on an individual basis. Call the Honors College at (573) 882-3893 to schedule an appointment or talk with an advisor. Students are assigned an advisor based on the first letter of their last name.

Stuart Palonsky, Chief Health Professions Advisor Stacey Preis, Health Professions Advisor (last names A-M) Marivern Easton, Health Professions Advisor (last names N-Z)

Students are expected to take an active role in preparing for their professional education. We encourage you to meet with your academic and health professions advisors on a regular basis to ensure that you are fulfilling the requirements for graduation and to prepare a strong application to the professional school of your choice.

Profession Profiles

Additional information may be found from the resources listed on p. 11.

Medicine

Physicians treat and prevent human illness, disease, and injury. There are two types of physicians: the M.D. (Doctor of Medicine) and the D.O. (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine). Medical school programs are four years in length. At the end of four years, allopathic institutions grant the M.D. degree and osteopathic institutions grant the D.O. degree. You should examine the similarities and differences in training and practice.

Additional graduate medical education may range from 3 to 7 years, depending on the specialty selected. Successful completion of national boards is required for certification prior to licensure.

Dentistry

Dentistry is the branch of the healing arts and sciences devoted to maintaining the health of teeth, gums, and other hard and soft tissues of the oral cavity. A dentist is a scientist dedicated to the highest standards of health through prevention, diagnosis and treatment of oral diseases and conditions.

Approximately 85% of dentists engage in general practice. The American Dental Association currently recognizes eight dental specialties—dental public health, endodontics, oral pathology, oral surgery, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, and prosthodontics. Becoming a recognized specialist usually requires from one to four years of additional training beyond the dental degree.

Dental school is four years in length for general practice. At the end of four years, a graduate earns a D.D.S., Doctor of Dental Surgery or a D.M.D., Doctor of Dental Medicine.

Optometry

Optometrists, or Doctors of Optometry, are independent primary healthcare providers who examine, diagnose, treat, and manage diseases and disorders of the visual system, the eye, and associated structures.

Doctors of Optometry receive four years of specialized professional education and clinical training at an accredited school of Optometry after completion of their undergraduate prerequisites. Most successful applicants

Pharmacy

Pharmacists are experts in the science of medications and the art of medication therapy. The principal goal of pharmaceutical care is to achieve definite outcomes from medication use which improve a patient's quality of life. These outcomes include: 1) cure of a disease; 2) elimination or reduction of symptoms; 3) arresting or slowing a disease process; 4) prevention of disease; 5) diagnosis of disease; and 6) desired alterations in physiological processes, all with minimal risk to patients.

In order to take the licensure examination, students must earn either the baccalaureate (B.S.) degree or the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) Degree. In July, 1992, a majority of the nation's schools and colleges of Pharmacy voted to move toward awarding the Doctor of Pharmacy degree as the only professional degree in pharmacy.

The B.S. of Pharmacy curriculum customarily requires a five-year program of college study. A Pharm.D. degree requires at least four academic years of professional study, following a minimum of two years of pre-professional study for a total of six years of postsecondary course work. A non-traditional Pharm.D. program also may be designed as a post-baccalaureate pharmacy curriculum with a combined period of study usually exceeding six years.

Podiatry

Podiatric medicine is a branch of the medical sciences devoted to the study of human movement with medical care of the foot and ankle as its primary focus.

A Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) specializes in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of foot disorders resulting from injury or disease. A DPM makes independent judgements, prescribes medications, and when necessary, performs surgery.

After completing four years of podiatric medical training, the podiatrist is required by most states to complete at least one year of postgraduate residency training. Surgically-based residencies can last from 1 to 3 years. State licensing requirements generally include graduation from an accredited college of podiatric medicine, passage of National Board examinations, and oral examinations.

MD/PhD Programs

If you are looking for a career that combines traditional clinical training with basic biomedical research, you may wish to consider pursuing a combined MD/PhD degree. Over 100 medical schools offer such programs. Some programs provide financial assistance (tuition assistance or stipends) for MD/PhD students through the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences. National predoctoral fellowships are also available through NIH, NSF and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. For information on MD/PhD programs, please see the health professions advisors.

Choosing a Major

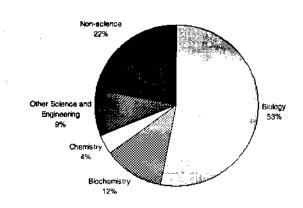
Students typically choose majors in biology, chemistry, or biochemistry because many of the pre-med requirements coincide with requirements for the major. You may choose to major in any field of study, provided you also fulfill

the admission requirements for all medical schools to which you apply. This requires careful planning, particularly if you are a non-science major. You should choose a major based upon a strong personal interest, with an eye toward various career paths in the field. Science majors are encouraged to select courses in humanistic studies and fine arts and in the social and behavioral sciences. Medical schools recognize the value of a liberal arts education as well as a candidate's proficiency in the sciences. (For a breakdown of applicants and matriculants by major at the MU School of Medicine, see page 12.)

MU's 1999 & 2000 Entering Medical School Class by Major

(percentages reflect an average of the 1999 & 2000 classes)

Source: AAMC Section for Student Services Admission Action Summary



Academic Requirements for Medical School Admission

Medical schools list specific requirements for admission in the annual Medical School Admissions Requirements (MSAR) published by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). Other professional schools have similar but less elaborate information booklets. These materials are available in the Honors College.

The following courses are the basic requirements and must be completed before matriculation:

- · One year of general chemistry with lab
- One year of organic chemistry with lab
- One year of physics with lab
- · One year of biological sciences with lab
- · One year of English (many schools will accept English 20 and a Writing Intensive course)

Required Courses for Medical School Admission

The list of recommended courses (p.5) provides the general minimum requirements for the schools to which MU students usually apply. For details on particular schools, consult the MSAR in the Honors College or your health professions advisor.

Please Note: Medical schools differ on their acceptance of AP credit for science and non-science course work. Check with your advisor and/or the MSAR. Do not make assumptions!

Additional Courses for Medical School Admission

Biochemistry is required by a few schools and recommended by several. If time allows, you are encouraged to take MU's Biochemistry 270. As noted earlier, individual medical schools have special requirements. Please consult the MSAR or web site of your target schools to learn about those special requirements. Some schools expect advanced biology (cell biology, physiology, and/or genetics) and/or advanced math (Washington University, for example, requires calculus 1 and II, MU's Math 80 and 175). Most schools, if not all, assume the completion of two courses in English composition. The University of Missouri's School of Medicine requires 2 semesters of English composition (English 20 and a Writing Intensive course for MU undergraduates).

Advanced science classes should be selected carefully to develop breadth of course work and to demonstrate academic abilities. If early science grades are not distinguished, then performing at a level of excellence in one or more upper-level or graduate-level science courses reflects well on your candidacy.

Medical schools are searching for broadly-educated individuals with excellent writing and speaking skills, who have developed analytical and synthetic thinking abilities. In addition to selecting a wide array of science courses, you are encouraged to balance your academic program to include history, art, literature, philosophy, social sciences, and communication skills.

How to use the table: Each of the required general subject areas is listed in bold face type in the far left column, with the course type listed underneath. The middle column indicates the minimum number of semester hours required by medical schools for each course type. In the far right column are the MU course options which meet the requirements within each subject area. These options are separated by the "OR" where applicable. Check with your advisor if you have questions.

Required or recommended courses	MU Semester Hours	University of Missouri-Columbia courses that fulfill these requirements or recommendations
CHEMISTRY		Students with a year or more of high school chemistry (with a grade of A or B) are encouraged to begin with Chem 32 or, if honors eligible, Chem 41.
General	8	Chemistry 31, 32, 33
\ \frac{1}{2}		OR
		Chemistry 32, 33**
		OR
Students will receive credit for Chem 31 upon the successful completion of Chem 32 (or Chem 41) at no additional cost.		Chemistry 41 Honors (Fall only) in lieu of Chem 32 & 33
Organic	8	Chemistry 210 and 212
		OR
		Honors Chemistry 216 and 217
PHYSICS		You are advised to consult with the requirements of your major in deciding which physics sequence to take.
General	8	Physics 21 and 22 (algebra based)
		OR
	·	Physics 175 and 176 (calculus based)
MATHEMATICS	9	College work in mathematics is required by some schools, highly recommended or assumed by most. A very few schools require one year of calculus. You should check the requirements of your major when deciding which math series to take.
College Algebra	3	Math 10 or 10A
Precalculus	3	Math 14
Calculus	6	Math 108, 208
"		OR
	10	Math 80, 175
BIOLOGY		
(Feneral	5	Biological Sciences 42 (formerly Biological Sciences 10)
Advanced A minimum of 1 additional advanced biology course is required by most medical schools. Two advanced biology courses are strongly recommended as preparation for medical school. There are many appropriate courses, the following are only examples.	3-5	Biological Sciences 202 Genetics Biological Sciences 203 Cell Biology Biological Sciences 270 Animal Physiology Biological Sciences 333 Histology Biological Sciences 370 Molecular Biology Biological Sciences 295/296 Honors Research in Biology among others

Preparing for the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test)

The MCAT is a standardized, eight-hour, multiple-choice examination designed to help medical school admissions committees predict which of their applicants will perform adequately in the medical school curriculum. The MCAT assesses facility with scientific problem solving, critical thinking and writing skills, as well as understanding of science concepts and principles identified as a prerequisite to the study of medicine. The four parts of the MCAT are Verbal Reasoning, Physical Sciences, Writing Sample, and Biological Sciences. The MCAT is administered twice a year, in April and August. It is strongly recommended that students take the test in April of their junior year. This strategy is important for two reasons: 1) Most medical schools accept students on a rolling admissions basis. Simply put, the "early bird catches the worm." Applying early in the application process is advantageous because interview slots are assigned as candidate files are processed. Medical schools will consider your file incomplete if your MCAT scores have not been reported. 2) If you are not satisfied with your score on the April MCAT, you may opt to retake the exam in August. (Be sure to consult your advisor before deciding to retake the MCAT). It is best to have completed most of the science courses required for admission before taking the MCAT.

MCAT registration packets are available at the Honors College in mid-February. You may also register online at www.aamc.org. Be careful not to miss the registration deadline of the test date of your choice. MCAT registration deadlines are approximately four weeks before the test date. Although late registration (two weeks before the test date) is possible, you must pay a non-refundable late fee of \$50 in addition to the \$175 regular examination fee.

Reviewing a preparatory manual to familiarize yourself with the test format is very helpful. The MCAT Student Manual (available for \$20 from AAMC - American Association Of Medical Colleges) describes the MCAT in detail, explains skills and science content basic to the test, includes helpful suggestions for taking the test, and provides samples of subtest question types. Flowers', Barron's, and other preparation guides are available at most bookstores (or from on-line resources like Amazon.com). Both Kaplan and Princeton offer MCAT review courses. For more details about the Stanley Kaplan course in Columbia, call 443-8378 or 1-800-527-8378. The number for the Princeton Review course is 1-800-273-8439. The Honors College maintains a library of full-length MCAT practice exams that may be checked out for review.

Admissions Tests and Requirements for Other Health Professions Schools

Students applying to schools of osteopathic and podiatric medicine are required to take the MCAT. Students applying to dental schools must take the DAT; students applying to schools of optometry must take the OAT; and students applying to schools of pharmacy must take the PCAT. Please refer to the Resource guide at the end of this booklet for test registration information. Many of the health professional schools require the same undergraduate course work as medical schools. However, there are some differences (e.g., several optometry programs require microbiology and statistics). Again, please check with individual schools for their requirements.

Other Important Healthcare Experiences

Prospective applicants should be aware that high grades in science classes alone are no guarantee of admission. In recent years, emphasis has been placed on the total education of physicians; therefore, student accomplishments in the liberal arts are closely scrutinized as well. Moreover, admissions committees do far more than just review undergraduate grades and MCAT scores; they make judgments about an applicant's character, knowledge of healthcare, and the depth of his or her commitment to a career in medicine. For example, admissions committees look for evidence that an applicant has gained some familiarity with the medical profession as a result of employment or volunteer work in a hospital, clinic, or physician's office. Many medical schools look for evidence of students' exposure to a wide range of people, especially people unlike themselves.

Some medical schools (for instance, Washington University and Stanford) value a research experience for all of their applicants, regardless of whether the applicant intends to pursue a combined MD/PhD program. All schools view past research experience as a reflection of a student's desire to explore a larger menu, a test of time-management skills, and a means of honing problem-solving skills.

Committees also like to see a record of active participation, and especially leadership, in campus or community groups. A demonstrated history of service and a broad understanding of the human condition are also screening points in the selection process. However, committee members recognize that some individuals may have been limited in their ability to participate in such activities because they have been forced to pursue part-time employment to finance their education. These applicants should not conclude that they will necessarily be at a disadvantage. A strong letter of recommendation from an employer attesting to the reliability and maturity of the applicant is likely to prove valuable.

To summarize, in addition to a review of course work, medical schools look for evidence of a student's:

- level of maturity,
- · involvement in community/service activities,
- · experience in healthcare institutions,
- · awareness of issues in medicine and medical ethics,
- human compassion and sensitivity along with evidence of activities reflecting these characteristics, and
- ability to think logically and solve problems.

The Application Process

Students applying to other health professions schools (dentistry, optometry, osteopathic medicine, or podiatric medicine) follow the same procedures as those outlined for pre-meds; the major difference is in the completion of appropriate application materials (AADSAS for dentistry, AACOMAS for osteopathic medicine, AACPMAS for podiatric medicine, or individual applications to schools of optometry).

Traditionally, students begin applying to medical schools during the summer before their senior year. The majority of medical, dental, and podiatric schools employ the services of a centralized application processing service to assist students in making the initial application. Such services collect, compute, and collate application data then forward the standardized information to the colleges selected by the applicant. Additional information about these services can be found in the Resources section of this booklet.

The Honors College will maintain a file for students applying to schools in the health professions. You are encouraged to start your file with your health professions advisor no later than spring of your junior year (approximately 16 months before expected medical school matriculation). Your advisor has a list of the information

necessary to complete your file. Included in your file will be letters of recommendation received for use in your

application to medical schools.

Most medical schools use The American Medical College Application Services (AMCAS), the centralized application processing service for applicants. It is recommended that you complete your AMCAS application and complete your file with the Honors College as early as possible to allow time for letters of recommendation to be returned and to make sure deadlines are not missed. Applications submitted near the deadline put students at a decided disadvantage at many schools. AMCAS deadlines range from October 15 to December 15. To avoid conflicts with class demands, you are encouraged to download application materials before leaving campus in the spring so you can work on these forms over the summer. AMCAS begins processing applications on June 1, and candidates are encouraged to apply as early as possible. The AMCAS application can be downloaded from the web site www.aamc.org. Students have until September 15th to complete their file at the Honors College.

NOTE: Students applying to the University of Missouri School of Medicine are asked to be sure to designate Writing Intensive courses with a "WI" when listing their courses on the AMCAS form. Medical schools do not receive copies of transcripts. They rely on how you have listed courses on the AMCAS application when verifying course requirements.

Personal Statement

All applications to professional schools require a personal statement, the purpose of which is to provide subjective information that will assist admissions committees in getting to know you as an individual. You should give careful thought to the preparation of this statement since it gives you the opportunity to discuss your motivation, objectives, professional interests, and background. It should, above all, be a statement of your relevant experiences, personal qualities, and attributes that will not only impress the admissions committees, but provide insight into your goals and aspirations and lead to their granting you an interview. It is advisable to mention one or two experiences that show your motivation and determination -- be specific.

Your personal statement should be revised until you feel it is clear and concise. Be sure that it is well-written and does not contain spelling or grammatical errors. You would benefit from having at least 2 or 3 people review your statement. Your health professions advisor, academic advisor, and or references are good people to ask. Bear in mind that the personal statement and the interview are the two areas in the application process that allow you to describe your unique qualities to admissions committees. Remember that a well-written statement can work to your advantage. You would be well advised to retain a copy of your personal statement, since references may be made to it in the interview setting. The Honors College has resources to help you write your statement.

Letters of Evaluation

Most medical schools require that the campus Premedical Advisory Committee prepare a composite letter of evaluation. At MU, this letter is prepared by the Honors College Health Professions Committee. Please see your health professions advisor regarding the procedures for requesting letters of evaluation and establishing a file in the Honors College.

Medical School Costs

Applicants should be aware of (and prepared for) the fact that applying to medical schools is expensive. For example, the cost of taking the MCAT is \$175. The cost of your AMCAS application depends on the number of schools to which you apply. The fee for the first designated medical school is \$150 and \$30 for each additional school. MU applicants (unless they are applying for the Early Decision Program option) apply to an average of eight schools. In addition, many medical schools charge a supplemental fee. Fee waiver or reduction options are available for both the MCAT and the AMCAS. The appropriate forms can be found online at www.aamc.org. All of these fees are subject to annual increases; consult the latest test and application packets for updated fee schedules. The fees quoted here are for the 2002 Entering Class.

In addition to application and testing fees, students are responsible for all expenses (including travel) associated with interviewing.

Early Decision Program (EDP)

The EDP allows you to apply to your first choice medical school prior to the regular admissions process (i.e., EDP candidates may apply to one school only). These applications are acted upon by October 1 of the year preceding expected matriculation. Applicants considered for EDP should have superior qualifications. Many medical schools will only review EDP applicants that are considered to be as good or better than the average matriculating applicant. At most schools, a candidate who does not gain admission through the EDP can be reconsidered through the regular admissions process. An EDP application sends a clear message to the school about the candidate's preference, a favorable message in the eyes of most schools.

EDP eligibility criteria are subject to annual review; therefore, you should contact the medical school of your choice in late spring or early summer to obtain the latest eligibility information. Qualified candidates who wish to matriculate at MU's School of Medicine are strongly urged to apply to the Early Decision Program. To make sure your file and letters are ready in time to take advantage of this option, you must notify the Health Professions Committee at the Honors College by the second semester of your junior year. EDP candidates must complete the application process by August 1st.

How Medical Schools (especially MU) Choose Their Students: A Summary of Essential Issues

Grades. Demonstration that the you are able to do well in science courses is a must. Generally, students with overall GPA's less than 3.4 and science GPA's less than 3.3 are at a disadvantage. For the University of Missouri School of Medicine's 2000 Entering Class, the average undergraduate GPA was 3.74 and the average science GPA was 3.68 (the national means of students accepted to medical school were 3.6 and 3.54, respectively).

MCAT Scores. For most schools, generally good performance (8 or above) is expected. MU's Entering Class of 2000 posted the following MCAT averages: 10 for Biological Sciences, 9.75 for Physical Sciences, and 9.77 for Verbal Reasoning (national averages for students accepted to medical school were 10.2, 10.0, and 9.5, respectively). It is also important that the MCAT scores reflect the GPA. While there are many good reasons for discrepancies, a student with high grades and low MCAT scores (or vice versa) can expect to be asked to explain the discrepancy at an interview.

Activities. Strong candidates for medical school have spent time in community or university service. Physicians need to have a good sense of community responsibility, and activities that reflect this make you a more competitive applicant. Involvement in student organizations, student government, religious or charitable organizations strengthens an application to medical school. Any leadership role you played in these organizations is evaluated favorably. Research experience is a positive factor (it is required of applicants for combined MD/PhD programs or programs that emphasize research in the medical curriculum). Employment may also be considered a strong positive.

Letters of evaluation. Letters are an important part of your application. It is important that as many of the evaluators as possible know you well. You are therefore encouraged to establish relationships with professors during your sophomore and junior years. Most schools ask for a letter from the Premedical Advisory Committee that prepares a composite document from several faculty assessments. Additional letters from community organizations or from an employer are usually helpful, especially if the employer can relate something of your compassion, sensitivity, etc. Students applying to osteopathic programs will need a letter of support from an osteopathic physician. Letters from political officials or from family friends and relatives are generally not helpful and may be a detriment. Students benefit from letters reflecting substantive relationships.

Interview. While it is understood that a 30-minute interview does not always represent you perfectly, this exchange gives the medical school a chance to assess your interpersonal skills and to ask about inconsistencies in your record. During most interviews, you are allowed to discuss aspects of the scholastic or extracurricular activities record that might not be well represented in the standardized application document. Additionally, the interview is a time for you to evaluate the institution in preparation for making a final selection decision. Students should not be overly modest, but should be proud of their accomplishments and relay that to the interviewers. It is important to be unaffected and sincere.

Medical schools are selective in offering interviews to applicants. A student applying to eight medical schools may receive six interviews, three interviews, or perhaps only one. Interviews may be individual or panel. They may be structured or informal; open or closed file. The Honors College has helpful information on interview techniques. Ask your advisors for tips on interview techniques and strategies. You may also want to check with MU's Career Center in Noyes Hall.

Resources

Students are encouraged to join and participate in MU's Pre-Med Club. The Club usually meets bimonthly, and meetings often feature guest speakers with useful information for pre-medical students. For information on Minorities in Medicine at MU, please see your health professions advisor.

MU Pre-Medical Club http://students.missouri.edu/~premed/
MU Pre-Dental Club (contact Dr. Gerald Summers, Pre-Dental Advisor 882-4369)

Allopathic Medicine

American Medical Association (AMA) www.ama-assn.org/

Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) www.aamc.org
-general information about MCAT, AMCAS, & Financial Aid as well as a listing of medical schools with links

American Medical Student Association (AMSA) www.amsa.org

Osteopathic Medicine

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) <u>www.aacom.org</u>
-general information about osteopathic medicine, application information, and osteopathic school listings
American Osteopathic Association <u>www.am-osteo-assn.org</u>

Dentistry

American Dental Association (ADA) www.ada.org
American Dental Education Association (ADEA) www.adea.org
-dental school listings, application information, DAT
Dental-Related Internet Resources www.dental-resources.com
PreDental.Com www.scholarware.com
-information from dental students

Optometry

The Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) www.opted.org

Pharmacy

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) <u>www.aacp.org</u> Pharmacy (general information) <u>www.pharmacy.org</u>

Podiatry

American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine (AACPM) www.aacpm.org

Journals

American Medical News www.ama-assn.org/public/journals/amnews
The New England Journal of Medicine www.nejm.org
Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) http://jama.ama-assn.org

Thank You

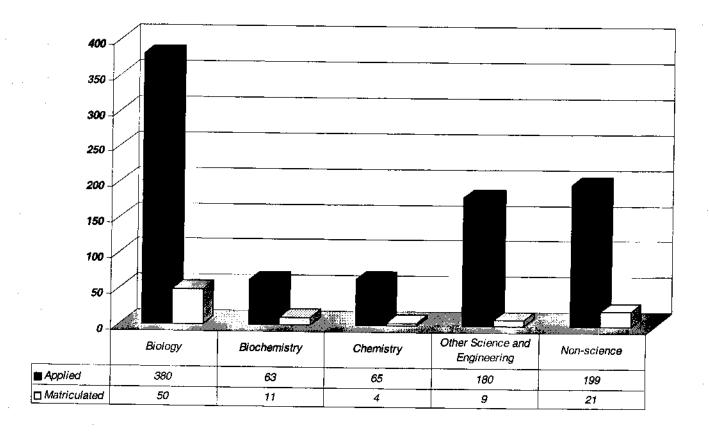
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Duke University School of Medicine
Washington University School of Medicine
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine
University of Illinois College of Medicine
University of Tennessee, Memphis College of Medicine
Tulane University School of Medicine
University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine

Applicants and Matriculants by Major

(Averages for 1999 & 2000 Entering Classes - MU School of Medicine)

Source: AAMC Section for Student Services Admission Action Summary



MU's Pre-med Advising Committee

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