**Tips for Your Health Professions Schools’ Interview**

**Duke University Office of Health Professions Advising**

**Logistics:**

* Plan your appearance, e.g. clean/pressed conservative clothes; hair out of face; shoes for walking\*
* Have a clear understanding of the interview format and schedule
* Research the school to know mission/focus of the school and guiding principles the school promotes; take note of what particularly interests you, e.g “why this school”
* Make arrangements to stay as close to campus as possible\*, e.g. with current student; plan to arrive early to interview day
* Bring a professional-looking folder/portfolio, pen and paper to take notes, NOT excessively during interview but to help you remember key points for later\*

**Preparation for the Interview:**

* Review your primary application and secondary application for the school, bring copies for your reference
* Review ALL listed activities on your application:
  + What was the highlight of the experience?
  + What skills or competencies did you demonstrate, e.g. time you worked with difficult classmate, etc.?
  + What was your role in the activity? Be careful not to exaggerate!
* Prepare to speak about goals and interests and why you want to be a [physician, dentist, pharmacist, etc.]
* Practice your responses out loud, e.g. voice or video recordings, with friends, to see if you are communicating what you want to communicate—DO NOT MEMORIZE RESPONSES AND SOUND REHEARSED OR “CANNED”!
* Prepare several good questions for the interviewer(s) from your research on the school, e.g. related to your interests; see examples in resources
* Review interview resources on HPA website [APPLY > Preparing for Your Interviews]

**During the Interview:**

* First impressions begin with initial handshake\*, smile, and greeting, so be prepared!
* Most experienced interviewers try to put students at ease to get to know the person behind the application, though on occasion interviewers will try to “stump” the interviewee. Be ready!
* Appearance and style count—remember you will be delivering both verbal and non-verbal messages, e.g. words + posture + eye contact + voice volume, inflection + movement
* Honesty, Honesty, Honesty.
* Pausing a moment to think before responding to a question is okay—don’t talk just to avoid silence and then have to dig out of a hole
* Courtesy, tact, and a sense of humor are generally well-received (avoid being flip or “too friendly”)
* Expect to be nervous—how will you deal appropriately?
* Use the **STAR** framework in talking about your experiences—**S**ituation | **T**ask | **A**ction | **R**esult—to tell the complete story, including results as well as your role

**While at the school for the interview:** \* for 2021M, this will be translated to the virtual environment!

* Be pleasant to everyone you meet
* Do not speak negatively about anyone or any other school
* Demonstrate flexibility and professionalism
* Engage with your fellow applicants

**Follow-up to the Interview:**

* It is appropriate to send a thank-you note to the interviewer(s), addressed to the individual or the admissions committee. Thank you notes can be emailed, but hard copy is a very nice touch. Remember the names of the interviewer(s) for your interview notes so you can refer to them directly in thank you notes.
* Most schools will give you a timeline for the acceptance process and when final decisions will be made. Be patient ☺ You can reach out to the school if you haven’t heard by the deadline they shared, but give them at least a week after the deadline before contacting them.

**In Case of Emergency:**

* Have phone numbers you may need for the day of your interview, not just email, e.g. admissions office\*
* If you are sick, reschedule your interview!

\* *not applicable for 2021M application cycle re: COVID-19 disruptions to in-person interviewing*

***Best wishes with your interview!***