How to Choose Your Medical Schools: A Practical Guide

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Summary of Dr. Ross’ System

- **Research**—physician/scientists
- **Hybrids**—strong research and embedded in the community; family medicine and other primary care initiatives
- **Community-based/Community benefit**—most interested in training clinicians, not aimed at research but have some capacity
12-15 Schools On Your List Is Safe!!

- Honest self-assessment—it starts with the quantitative numbers and credentials, but doesn’t end there.
- Must have self-understanding and demonstrate in your application portfolio the core set of entry-level competencies. REMEMBER YOUR PIR?!?!?!?
School Criteria From The Student Panel:

- Location/Lifestyle (Yes! It is ok to put this into your decision!)
- Curriculum: Pass/fail vs. graded; How long to pre-clinical experiences?
- Research Opportunities
- Finances and debt-load
- Specialties you explored here, i.e. MPH, etc.
- International opportunities
- Student culture: Where will I feel most comfortable, fit in, etc?.
- Mentorship
- Commitment to underserved communities
Guiding Questions for Reflection:

- What makes me happy most here at WU?
- Where do I spend most of my time and why?
- What do I value and how is that illustrated in where I spend my time and attention?
- How have I demonstrated leadership, service, compassion for others?
Final Thoughts and Helpful Tips From Our Student Panel..

• Talk to people you know at the med schools; join the “Prehealth Advising at WashU” Facebook group.

• SDN website discussions: simply Google "sdn [insertmedschoolname]". The "School Feedback" section of SDN: http://schools.studentdoctor.net/. Scroll down and click on any school (there's a Washington University School of Medicine in Belize!). To get to their interview feedback (with lots of useful comments), then click "View survey results" in the middle Interview Feedback panel.

• Career Center interview practice
More Helpful Tips From The Student Panel!

• Look at the secondary questions from last year’s cycle. Available online. Pre-write secondaries!
• Check out the online versions of the med schools’ newspaper.
• Go beyond the med school mission statements because they all sound the same, but do read them!
• Talk with students and others at the schools you want to attend. Don’t be shy!
• Schools with residency preferences—Believe them and take them off your list no matter how tempting!
Research the Schools! Talk with People!

• Do this NOW until the end of June.
• Look at secondary questions NOW and get started. This will signal what the schools care about.
• Apply to less schools and spend more time doing the 12-15 with excellence and in-depth.
• Be honest with yourself. Ask: “If I only got in here, would I go?”
• You have more choice and agency than you think. Ask about fit and culture at interviews.
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