What you need to think about as pre-pharmacy at UT Austin ---
Myths, Mistakes, & Making it work

Rich Wilcox, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean for Admissions / Advising
Professor of Neuropharmacology
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Why chat about myths? Because they can hurt your application

- Tools of the PharmD Admissions Committee?
- These are **NOT** included among our tools!

No way - no how
Myth #1

- The PharmD program only cares about GPA and PCAT scores, not about passion for or experience in Pharmacy.
  - Not true!
  - Yes, the average GPA and PCAT are high, but
  - Virtually all admitted students have significant amounts of Pharmacy work experience, community service experience, and organizational experience.
GPA breakdown by bin

Enrolled students
GPA bin 2010

Number of students

GPA

3.76-4.00 3.51-3.75 3.26-3.50 3.01-3.25 2.76-3.00 2.51-2.75 <=2.5
PCAT breakdown by bin

Enrolled students
PCAT Bin 2010

Number of students

PCAT %

99-90 89-80 79-70 69-60 59-50 <50
The following five graphs are based on surveys conducted by Arlyn Kloesel and data entry and compilation by Paul Gavaza.
Pharmacy work experience entering classes 04-07

Entering class PHR work

% Work in PHR

Year

2004 2005 2006 2007

% Work PHR
Types of Pharmacy work experience

PHR work by job type
2004-2007

% Community Hospital Other PHR

%
Volunteer hours for 2007 class

Volunteer hours for 2007 entering class
Type of volunteer activity

- Type 1: Nursing home, elder care, meals on wheels
- Type 2: Hospitals (outside of the Pharmacy)
- Type 3: Habitat for Humanity
- Type 4: School (mentoring, tutoring)
- Type 5: Other service
Type of volunteer activity

Volunteer service by type of activity

Volun Type

%
Myth #2

• Communication skills don’t matter as admission criteria.
  – Not true!
  – No one is admitted to the PharmD program without being effective in their interview.
  – The committee has denied folks with a 4.0 GPA and 99% on the PCAT because during the interview they did not communicate effectively OR did not convey a real interest in helping other people.
**Myth #3**

- Language skills don’t matter as admission criteria.
  - Not true!
  - Writing achievement and potential are evaluated specifically by the PCAT writing score
  - and by a standard score that I calculate that includes writing, verbal and reading.
Communication Skills

Communication
PCAT writing
Interview

Scale score

Writing score max 5
Interview max 5

Communication

2007 Class
Myth #4

• Letters of recommendation don’t matter to the admissions committee.
  – Not true!
  – Letters of recommendation from Pharmacists are the gold standard for admission!
  – It is a red flag if someone indicates that they work in a pharmacy and do NOT have a letter from a pharmacist.

Actual gold standard & red flag used by Admissions
Myth #5

- All admits must have experience as CPhT.
  - Notice that this myth is inconsistent with Myth #1.
  - Not true!
  - However, the admissions committee does make every effort to find out if the applicant has really “tried out” the profession in a serious way [not an internet search].
  - This usually meaning WORKING in a Pharmacy environment for several hundred hours.
Myth #6

• What the applicant says about himself / herself [in the essays and resume] doesn’t matter.
  – Not true!
  – The essay topics are
    • “Why Pharmacy?” and
    • “Why UT?”.
  – Honest communication about events that shaped the person’s life is very important.
Myth #6 continued

- What the applicant says about himself / herself [in the essays and resume] doesn’t matter.
  - Resume: **key** part of the application.
    - The committee cares about organizational activities and service!
    - Actual keys uses by the admissions committee shown to right.
Myth #7

• The admissions process is highly subjective and strongly influenced by one or two people.
  – This is SO not true!!
  – There are 23 people on the committee including students [3], practitioners [5], clinical faculty [7] and other faculty members.
  – Admissions Committee members are from Austin, San Antonio, El Paso and the Valley.
Myth #7 continued

• The admissions process is highly subjective and strongly influenced by one or two people.
  – There is a vote on EACH applicant. There is almost always a consensus on each decision.
  – All applications are looked at by more than one person.
  – All committee members have full access to all information on all applicants.
  – Actual hanging chad used by admissions committee shown to right.
  – http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/USPics43/2000-florida-recount01b.jpg
UT is using an application set up by the UT Office of Admissions
- Texas Common Application
- PharmD Supplemental Application

Application is all on line
- It’s so easy anyone can do it.
- Actual applicant shown on right
- http://www.illuminati-news.com/graphics/06-10/102306/a/Einstein.gif
Application Overview 2

- Actual applicant shown on right after submission of application.
✓ Pre-req GPA should ideally be > 2.8
  ✓ > 90% of successful applicants have GPA > 3.0
  ✓ > 50% of successful applicants have GPA > 3.5
✓ PCAT scores with writing should ideally be > 70% with a writing score of at least 3.0.
  ✓ > 75% of successful applicants have a PCAT composite score ≥ 70%
  ✓ > 50% of successful applicants have a PCAT composite score ≥ 85%
✓ Letters of recommendation - knows you on a professional level
GPA for Each Class

GPA data

YEAR

GPA

GPA


3.7

3.6

3.5

3.4

3.3

3.2
PCAT for Each Class
Degrees of enrolled students

DEGREES of PharmD entering students

- **NO DEGREE**
- **Baccalaureate**
- **Master's or higher**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
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Supplemental PharmD Application

- All on line
- Two mini-essays
  - Why Pharmacy?
  - Why UT Austin?
- Resume
- Interview
- Letters of recommendation
Size of Applicant Pool

Admissions Statistics

- Received
- Reviewed
- Accepted
- Enrolled

Number of Applicants

Year

Balances #1

- I advise several hundred applicants and meet with more than 100 denied applicants each admissions cycle.
- The first thing that I tell them is that the admissions committee has two equally important things that they try to glean from an application:
  - Academic ability [pre-req GPA and PCAT, plus grades in advanced science courses for those applicants who do additional academic work]
  - Knowledge of and passion for pharmacy [resume, essays, letters of recommendation, interview]
The second thing that I tell applicants is that those activities that help them develop academically, professionally and as people are exactly the things that most interest an admissions committee.

- I do not tell people to repeat courses in most circumstances.
- I do not tell people to retake the PCAT in most circumstances.
- I do tell people to **gain more direct work experience** in health care and especially in pharmacy.
- I do tell people that if they cannot find a paying job then they should consider volunteering at one of the major “free clinics” where they live.
The third thing that I tell applicants is that **the only activities that matter to the admissions committee are the activities that matter to the applicant.**

- The admissions committee supports applicants with diverse passions for service.
- Successful applicants to the PharmD program invariably have shown by how they live their lives that they truly care about helping people.
Balances #4

- The applicants about whom the admissions committee gets the most excited are those young people whose lives inspire us!
• Passion for serving others
  – As I participate in many UT recruiting events throughout the year, I ALWAYS tell the audiences that nothing so well characterizes our PharmD students as their passion for service.
  – Most of them realize that this should be THE major focus of their lives.
Core Characteristic #2

• Disciplined life style
  – Successful applicants come to us with a significant history of discipline.
    • Most have already been putting in 60 - 70 hour “work” weeks including academics, work, and service.
  – Successful PharmD students quickly learn that such discipline is the key to success.
Core Characteristic #3

- Pre-pharmacy experience in a health care setting.
  - Virtually all successful applicants understand at least one type of pharmacy experience because they have real world work experience in that setting.
  - That direct experience manifests in real insight about the issues facing the profession during the interview AND a more mature approach to their course work.
Core Characteristic #4

• Significant work / volunteer experience.
  – In spite of heavy pre-req course loads and work, **successful applicants care enough about service that they DO IT**.
  – They continue their service by becoming heavily involved in student organizations and service while in the PharmD program.
Leadership potential

- All of our successful PharmD students are able to look within themselves and find the qualities that allow them at least to be “quiet leaders”, i.e., those people to whom others turn for advice and counsel.
Conclusions

• Myths: 7
• Balances: 4
• Core characteristics: 5
• UT PharmD students are caring young people who put others first, have experience in the real world, work really really hard and are smart too!
• Hook ‘Em!
How to Apply

On-line at
www.utexas.edu/pharmacy

select Admissions
select Pharm.D. Admissions
Pharmacy admissions - How to get information

- [http://www.utexas.edu/pharmacy/admissions/pharmd.html](http://www.utexas.edu/pharmacy/admissions/pharmd.html)

- Contact for Asst. Dean for Admissions [Dr. Richard E. Wilcox]:
  - Wilcoxrich@mail.utexas.edu
When to Apply

On-Line Application cycle

Begins August 1
Ends January 6

Both TCA and PharmD in by January 6
Pharmacy Pre-req courses & UT graduation requirements

Chemistry
- General
- Organic

Math
- Calculus
- Statistics

Physics

Biology
- Cellular
- Structural
- Genetics
- Micro

English
- Composition
- Literature

Basic Educ Require
- Core curric
- Skills & exper flags
- Foreign Lang
NAPLEX pass rates

NAPLEX® % Passing Rate 1st Time Takers
2006-Present

- UT
- State
- Nation
MPJE pass rates

MPJE % PASS 1st TIME TAKERS

TEST WINDOW

% PASS

June 2006
Dec 2006
June 2007
Dec 2007
June 2008
Dec 2008
April 2009
Aug 2009
Dec 2009
April 2010

UT
Texas
Nation
The College of Pharmacy offers PhD programs in:

- Pharmacy Administration
- Pharmacy Practice
- Pharmacotherapy
- Pharmaceutics
- Medicinal Chemistry
- Pharmacology / Toxicology