

## **University of Delaware Center for Health Profession Studies**

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### **Historical Foundation**

#### **Origin**

The Office of the Provost created a taskforce in the spring of 2011 to examine the status of “premedical education at the University of Delaware” existing at that time. Membership on the Taskforce was highly diverse with representatives from Thomas Jefferson University, Christiana Care Hospital Services, the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Health Sciences, the Office of Admissions, and premedical/health profession students. Dr. David Barlow from the College of Health Sciences was designated Chair. The taskforce was charged to review and evaluate current premedical studies practices, with the goal of making recommendations for changes perceived essential for enhancing the success of all students in gaining admission into medical schools and other health profession programs.

The first major recommendation endorsed unanimously by the taskforce was to create a “Center for Premedical and Health Profession Studies.” The focus of this Center would be to help students across all colleges who wanted to pursue careers in the health professions. The Provost’s taskforce viewed the Center as the best approach for advising pre-health profession students in a comprehensive manner.

#### **Locations**

A three-year agreement was created in the summer of 2011 to locate and host the new Center for Premedical and Health Profession Studies (CPHPS) within the facilities of the Career Services Center. Reporting to the Office of the Provost, the Center was formally announced with a University-wide opening ceremony in January of 2013. The Center’s goal was to benefit students in all colleges, and the success of the Center would depend on University-wide support. The cross-college initiative is reflective of a new emerging approach to healthcare which is inter-professional and across disciplines. Initial funding for the Center came in part from a UNIDEL grant received in 2012. The name of the Center was shortened to the Center for Health Profession Studies (CHPS) in 2017. Following an almost two-year temporary location in Hullihen Hall, the Center was formally relocated and re-dedicated at its permanent location in 105e Pearson Hall in October of 2017 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Pearson Hall



### **Initial Staffing**

Initial staffing included the assignment of a Center Director (David Barlow) and an Administrative Assistant (Laura Pawlowski). The demand for staffing increased dramatically and, starting in 2014, expanded to include a Program Manager, two partial workload faculty Health Professions Advisors (HPA), a miscellaneous wage HPA/HPEC Assistant, a Graduate Assistant HPA, and a number of undergraduate assistants/peer mentors. The additional staffing served to address a rapid increase in the demand for advisement services, the growing popularity of numerous co-curricular programs, and the increased sponsored activities that the Center provides students.

### **Mission Statement and Goals**

The Center for Health Profession Studies supports and encourages students from all majors who are pursuing careers in the health professions. The Center remains focused on student outcomes – helping students achieve success in careers that they have chosen: medicine, dentistry, optometry, podiatry, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, pharmacy, physical/occupational therapy and other health profession programs. The Center provides advisement and referral services to a growing community of pre-health profession students in all colleges in their academic and extracurricular preparation to improve success of acceptance into healthcare profession programs. Over 1900 students utilized the resources and services of the Center in 2019 alone.

Three main goals of the Center are to:

- Help students make informed decisions about their choice of a future healthcare profession.
- Promote academic excellence by providing accurate and up-to-date guidelines for completing pre-health profession curricular requirements, for thoroughly

understanding all admission requirements, and for using all available resources of the Center.

- Support active student engagement within the healthcare community, primarily through clinical work, voluntary service, and translational research.

## **Services/Program Activities of the Center**

In addition to group meetings, special programs, field trips, and sponsored monthly guest lecturers, students may seek individual assistance from the Center. Students can schedule an appointment via email, online, or phone to meet with one of the health professions advisors. Additionally, Center administrative staff members are available for walk-in students to meet briefly, one-on-one, to discuss their academic goals or concerns. No appointments are necessary and students are seen on a first-come, first-served basis. Walk-in hours are provided during the fall and spring semesters. A few phone appointments are set aside each week.

## **Standardized Test Preparation Resources**

*KAPLAN/NextStep/UWorld/ExamCrackers* and other standardized test preparation programs are frequently supported often with financial incentives/discounts to aid pre-health profession students in their preparation for MCAT/DAT/GRE examinations.

## **Pre-Health Profession's Living Learning Community**

Since 2014 the Center has created and sponsored a highly successful first-year Pre-Health Professions Living Learning Community for freshmen students interested in pre-health professions. Students accepted into the program have the opportunity to live in close proximity with over 65 other freshmen, mentored by two upperclassman peer mentors and one graduate assistant, all who have similar career interests and are taking similar courses. The students have access to extra support from faculty and staff of the Center to pursue career and graduate school interests. In addition, they have access to professionals knowledgeable about standardized tests (e.g., MCAT), graduate school applications, academic, and co-curricular requirements. Programs and events in the residence hall include exciting speakers from the healthcare industry, extracurricular enrichment, health-related volunteer experiences, and social events. Since the initiation of this Living Learning Community, the program has produced a remarkable 100% retention rate over the past five years.

## **Medical Internships Abroad Programs**

Students have the opportunity to participate in exciting health profession medical internship opportunities abroad sponsored by the Center during special sessions. Since 2012, over 160 students have performed medical internships traveling to seven different countries including Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Hungary, China, and Turkey in partnership with the University Institute of Global Studies and a program called Atlantis. In all the programs, students shadow doctors, interact with health profession students from other cultures, and gain an understanding of international healthcare systems. In June of 2014, students participated in St. George's University "Summer Leadership Academy" in the West Indies experiencing introductions to their medical, veterinary, and public health professional programs of study on the island of Granada in the West Indies. All of these study abroad experiences hosted and guided by UD

faculty help students distinguish themselves as outstanding applicants for medical school and other health-related professional schools.

### **Premedical Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program**

This unique program, limited to 20 post-baccalaureate students, is designed for those qualified individuals who have previously completed a bachelor's degree in a non-science related field but who now want to fulfill the requirements for admission to medical, dental, or other health profession schools. Accepted students work closely with the Center to develop a structured individualized program of study that addresses the academic and co-curricular requirements to be considered for admission to medical, dental, or other health profession schools. Since 2015, over 90% of these post baccalaureate students completing this program achieving a certificate of academic excellence have successfully matriculated into medical/physician assistant programs of study. Designed to support “career changers”, this program is affiliated with the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine which is a part of a cohort agreement with the UD Post Baccalaureate Program.

### **Collaborations**

The Center has established affiliations/agreements with area hospitals and healthcare organizations to provide UD students with unique learning experiences. Some of these include the Delaware Institute for Medical Education and Research (DIMER) and the Delaware Health Science Alliance (DHSA). In addition, the Center has agreements with Christiana Care Health System and St. Francis Hospital of Wilmington. These latter affiliations support approximately 35 premedical studies students each year performing over 250 hours each of shadowing medical preceptors in a variety of different healthcare settings. In the past this also included shadowing opportunities for students in the Delaware Division of Forensic Science.

Through the Medical Scholars Program, the Center has formal affiliations with the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University, the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, and the Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine. The Center sponsors frequent field trips to these institutions as well as to other institutions such as The Pennsylvania State University Hershey College of Medicine, Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, and the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. In addition, students in the past have visited the Virtual Education Simulation Training Center at Christiana Care Health System.

### **Medical Scholars Program (MSP)**

Established in 1993, the Medical Scholars Program is a unique early admissions premedical 4 + 4 academic program in the Center sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Delaware and by the Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University. As a dual major, eight-year academic program, in 2018/19 the UD MSP expanded to affiliate with the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and the Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine. It is designed for students who are certain that they want to become physicians and who desire a program that blends the scientific and cultural aspects of the medical humanities. The MSP is accomplished by providing highly qualified students with a balanced education in liberal arts, science, and professional studies. The program includes the traditional courses in the life/physical sciences as well as a specialization in areas related to medicine

dealing with Bioethics, Administration and Public Policy, Translational Research, or Nutrition and Health. Small group discussions, problem-based instruction, and discipline specific practicum experiences in clinical/ institutional settings, all experienced with strong mentoring, are special aspects of this program.

To become a part of this early conditional acceptance programs, students in the second semester of their freshman year attend an orientation meeting to declare an interest in the program. Students are required to attend monthly Medical Scholar Program (MSP) meetings, accumulate volunteer/shadowing hours, obtain letters of recommendation, and achieve academic excellence. During the spring semester of the sophomore year, students from this group complete an application to the program, and as qualified rising juniors, are recommended by the University of Delaware for interviews at one of the prestigious medical school cohorts. Following a successful interview, students are granted provisional acceptance to medical school. Students then declare a second major, Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, completing the core science medical school requirements, combined with studies in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Seniors in the MSP must continue to demonstrate a high level of academic performance and achieve a minimum score on the MCAT prior to medical school matriculation.

Since 2008, a total of 482 students have obtained baccalaureate degrees in the Medical Scholars Program resulting in a medical school matriculation rate of 72% in post-graduate year one (PGY1) (see Figure 2). In PGY2 the success rate rises to a remarkable 95% over this same period. DIMER eligible in-state students accounted for slightly more than 62% of these former UD MSP graduates. In the past 12 years a total of 384 medical practica/internships were performed by these same students involving at minimum 48,000 hours of shadowing healthcare professionals regionally and internationally. Note that the major percentage of these shadowing hours were supported by ChristianaCare and other local area medical facilities such as St. Francis Hospital in Wilmington.

The MSP is operated through the Center for Health Profession Studies under the direction of David A. Barlow, PhD, since 2008.

Figure 2. Recent UD MSP Graduates now in Medical Schools



## **CENTER Future Goals**

The Center for Health Profession Studies strives to expand services to students and alumni not only to the University, but also to our neighboring state institutions who are considering careers in the various health professions. Available to students across all majors and colleges, the Center will continue to enable a growing population of students who are interested in the highly competitive health profession careers to make conscious and thoughtful decisions about their future paths. Increased guidance and resources are provided along the “pre-health profession” pathways, from curricular planning, to securing clinical and research opportunities, to preparation for required standardized tests, to participation in health-related internships/in-service activities, and finally to the successful completion of the application process for medical, dental, veterinary and other health profession graduate schools.

For more information about the CENTER, please visit:

Center for Health Profession Studies, University of Delaware

105e Pearson Hall

125 Academy Street

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<https://sites.udel.edu/healthpro>

**Summary List of Center Sponsored Programs**

Medical/Dental Scholars Program (College of Arts & Sciences)

Premedical Post Baccalaureate Certificate Program (PMPB)

Pre-Health Professions Living Learning Community

Medical Internships Abroad/Domestically

Medical Practica Capstone Courses

ARSC480

ARSC482

HOSP300

SOCI410

Regional Medical/Dental School Field Trips

Medical School Affiliations

Sydney Kimmel Medical College (Thomas Jefferson University)

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine

St. George's University (Medicine/Veterinary Medicine)

Area Hospital Affiliations

Christiana Care Health Services

St. Francis Hospital (Wilmington)

Standardized Test Preparation Programs

Writing Personal Essays

Mock Interview Training

Admissions Applications/Process (AMCAS, AACOMAS, OTCAS, PTCAS, CASPA)

Exam Preparation Affiliations (MCAT, GRE, DAT, etc.)

Kaplan

NextStep

UWorld

ExamKrackers

Magoosh

Baron

Health Professions Advisement Services

Medicine

Dentistry  
Optometry  
Podiatry  
Physician Assistant  
Advanced Nurse Practitioner  
Pharmacy  
Occupational/Physical Therapy  
Anesthetist Assistant  
Veterinary Medicine  
Chiropractic  
PrepMed/Medical Devices  
Post Baccalaureate Certificate Program  
Registered Student Organization Sponsorships  
Pre-SOMA  
Pre-Dental Society  
Phi Delta Epsilon  
Making Doctors  
Minority Association of Pre-Health Students  
Occupational Therapy Club  
Annual Spring “Health Professions Fair”  
Professional affiliations  
North East Association of Advisors for the Health Care Professions (NEAHP)  
National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP)

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