

Mock Residency Interviews: Preparing Students for Success in the Residency Application Season



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INTRODUCTION

- The residency interview is the most pivotal and least rehearsed component of the residency application process
- Developed and instituted a comprehensive program of faculty-directed mock residency interviews
- Available to all fourth year medical students for all specialty choices

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Utilizes guidelines for behavioral interviews and standard scoring of applicants
- Faculty volunteers serve as interviewers
- Part of our Colleges and Careers in Medicine continuum
- Students provide their CV, personal statement, and a “fact sheet” (Fig. 1) in advance of the mock interview to facilitate faculty preparedness
- Students participate in structured interviews in a realistic environment
- Faculty provide direct feedback
- Highlights individual strengths, weaknesses
- Seeks to improve areas where students could potentially falter during actual interviews

DISCUSSION

- The entire residency application process is an anxiety provoking endeavor for the rising fourth year medical student. Unmatched students have increased stress in securing residency spots, and are now required to participate in the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP) or else risk going unmatched. Despite countless hours of test preparation and testing, clinical experiences, creation of CV and personal statements, research endeavors, and accumulation of references for letters of recommendation, most medical students remain ill prepared in the skills necessary to successfully navigate a residency interview. Though the interview often represents the “make or break” component of the application process, especially when establishing distinction between two academically similar candidates, medical students receive the least instruction and often no formal practice in residency interviewing skills. Additionally, students with strong interviewing skills (indicated by their ability to secure a spot during the medical school admissions process) may have encountered failures or poor scores during medical school, and remain unprepared in dealing with questions that arise during an often stress-provoking residency interview.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Most students need interview rehearsal and feedback prior to actual residency interviews but have no or little opportunity to practice
- Barriers to developing a mock interview program may include lack of student or faculty buy-in, or the absence of a structured program
- Participating students report improved confidence during actual interviews, and in part, attribute the program to helping them secure top residency positions
- Early student data collected indicate high perceived need and planned participation by students

Fig. 1

VUSM College RIPP IT Program Applicant Fact Sheet

Applicant Name: _____
Specialty: _____

Note: Your participation in this program and your choice to complete this form is VOLUNTARY and strictly your choice. The material contained on this sheet is PRIVATE and will not be shared with anyone except your faculty member conducting the interview, and anyone else you permit for use in counseling you on preparing for your real interviews. Please submit this form along with your CV and personal statement to your interviewer in advance of your scheduled interview.

1. USMLE Step 1 Score: _____
2. Honors in: _____
3. Failures in: _____
4. College Honors? (Phi Beta Kappa, etc?): _____
5. Junior AOA or expected Senior AOA? Yes/No (circle one)
6. Research Projects (i.e., Emphasis Project, others): _____
7. First author or significant authorship in published or yet-to-be-published research? : Yes/No (circle) If yes, please describe: _____
8. Advanced degree held or in progress (PhD, MPH)? _____
9. Please list any SIGNIFICANT concerns that you believe you have or will be noted in your Dean's Letter which you feel could have a significant impact on your application or interview: _____
10. Please list any additional information that you feel would influence your ability to secure a quality residency spot: _____