

Pre-Professional Advising

The most significant and exciting statistics about the OPPA are the acceptance rates, average GPAs and MCAT scores nationally compared to those at USC. The acceptance rate of USC students to medical and law school surpassed the national rates. With USC medical school applicants scoring lower than the national average on MCAT scores and GPA of accepted students, and surpassing the national average in acceptance rates, the services of the OPPA must be preparing USC students better than most schools, in the non-academic portion of the application. For acceptance to medical school the non-academic factors, such as health care exposure, leadership opportunities, and other life experiences, are crucial for admission. The availability of these activities through the OPPA and other offices on campus may be directly influencing acceptance rates. Our overriding goal is to help USC students with acceptance to professional school, and examining the national v. USC data, the office appears to be demonstrating success.

- **Goal No. 1** - Assist in the recruitment of high-quality and diverse students to the University.
 - *Goal No. 1 - Contributes to*
 - Student Affairs & Academic Support
 - **Strategic Goal No. 1** - Lead and manage the comprehensive and collaborative efforts of the University in meeting student enrollment goals.
 - **Initiative 1(a)** - Conduct activities that enhance recruitment of pre-professional student.
 - **Action Plan** - Provide presentations/office presence upon request for Carolina Scholars, McNair Scholars, Junior Preview, and Fall & Spring Open Houses.
 - **KPI** - Present at all of the above as requested.
 - **KPI** - Distribute office literature to prospective students and parents.
 - **Action Plan** - Collaborate with Visitors Center to meet with prospective students.
 - **KPI** - Track Number of students referred from Visitor Center.
 - **KPI** - Accommodate 95% of meeting requests.

The Office of Pre-Professional Advising (OPPA) is a key recruiting tool for USC, especially for the Carolina and McNair scholarship candidates. Few colleges and universities have an office such as the OPPA offering comprehensive, personalized assistance for pre-professional students. As was indicated in last year's office survey, many students choose to come to USC to take advantage of the OPPA's services and activities. We continue to work closely with Admissions, the Visitor Center, the Athletic Department, and academic units across campus in recruiting desired students.

- An office representative presented at each of the events.
 - Literature was distributed to audience.
 - The OPPA and Visitor Center maintain a record of prospective student visits.
 - 100% of the requests were accommodated
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- **Action Plan** - Offer Pre-medical Academic and Career Exploration Series (PACES) Summer Camp to incoming pre-med freshmen.
 - **KPI** - Conduct the camp for 40 students, summer 2008.
 - **KPI** - Maintain student satisfaction rating of at least 80%.
 - **KPI** - Demonstrate learning outcome attainment in 95% of students

As preparation for medical school entails three years of academic rigor and involvement in many types of activities, it is imperative that students are aware early of the demands for the necessary groundwork. The PACES camp introduces highly motivated participants to skills necessary for

their academic preparation and campus services to help them (Student Success Center). The camp also provides hospital shadowing opportunities for the participants, a tour of the USC School of medicine, information about community service opportunities, student organizations, and other campus services. By the end of the camp, the students are familiar with the campus, know where their classes are, and become well-acquainted with 49 other freshmen pre-med students. Many students who have attended the camp in the past have indicated that the reason they chose USC was to attend this camp and benefit from the office services. The learning outcomes for the camp were developed from meetings with professional school admission directors, medical students, and knowledge of university services.

- Conducted two camps for 76 students
 - Student satisfaction survey revealed satisfaction rating of 4.6/5 or 92%
 - The OPPA used a different measure for learning outcome assessment. Using a paired t test from pre-and post-tests of knowledge, the P value was less than .0001, which is considered extremely statistically significant
- **Action Plan** - Coordinate day-long pre-law conference for incoming pre-law students.
 - **KPI** - Have plan in place to conduct the conference for 20 students, summer 2009.
 - **KPI** - Have all activities and events planned by end of academic year.
 - **KPI** - Demonstrate learning outcome attainment in 95% of students.
 - **KPI** - Maintain student satisfaction rating of at least 80%.

The Drive-In conference for pre-law students assists students in preparing for their eventual application to law school. Focusing on components of a strong application, the students become familiar with the necessary steps to achieve competitiveness, the realities of law school classes, and the services on campus that can assist them.

- Plan is in place (location, speakers, activities, lunch), registration form is available on the OPPA website
 - Tentative plan is in place early
 - Program has not yet occurred, but the 95% is not a reasonable expectation
 - The OPPA will use a pre-post test and paired t test for the results to determine if statistically significant
 - Program has not yet occurred
- **Initiative 1(b)** - Update OPPA website to include information for high school students and parents.
 - **Action Plan** - Add information about high school prep for pre-law and pre-med students.
 - **KPI** - Have updates in place by the end of the academic year.
 - **KPI** - Create highly visible links to the information.

As high school students explore their options for college, websites become increasingly important. Many pre-med and pre-law students are already aware of their career choices, and seek information about high school preparation. The information on the OPPA website specifically targets those students and introduces them to the services of the OPPA and more importantly to USC's website.

- Updates have been added to the OPPA website
 - Link highly visible on homepage
- **Initiative 1(c)** - Rewrite printed material for pre-enrollment students; reach out to minority students.
 - **Action Plan** - Design a Guide to Services for prospective students.
 - **KPI** - Have Guide in place by end of 2008-2009.
 - **KPI** - Include information about shadowing programs, student organizations advised by the OPPA, orientations, Pre-Law Certificate program, Medical Humanities Minor, and the Association for Minority Pre-health Students.

Prospective students are frequent visitors to the OPPA. **During these meetings, the benefits and advantages of USC in general and the OPPA specifically are clarified. The students and their parents leave with a comprehensive list of services to which they can refer when making their final college choices.**

A temporary guide is in place. The permanent guide is written, but not printed due to budget cuts.

- **Goal No. 2** - Enhance Pre-Professional student engagement, success and satisfaction on campus; promote academic success and career development.
 - *Goal No. 2 - Contributes to*
 - Student Affairs & Academic Support
 - **Strategic Goal No. 2** - Optimize student retention and persistence to degree completion by increasing engagement in campus life and by providing and supporting essential programs, services, and educational activities that lead to student success and satisfaction.
 - **Strategic Goal No. 3** - Advance a global community of scholars that promotes academic success, character development, personal growth and wellness, career development, and lifelong learning.
 - **Initiative 2(a)** - Partner with housing to provide Living & Learning Communities.
 - **Action Plan** - Coordinate Communities.
 - **KPI** - Recruit at least 20 students for freshmen pre-med community, 10 for upper class pre-med community and 10 for pre-law community.
 - **KPI** - Maintain monthly meetings of all communities.
 - **KPI** - Demonstrate end-of-year student satisfaction rating of at least 80%.

Student participation in living and learning communities allows for the development of support networks, camaraderie, and campus relationships. The OPPA has worked with Housing for several years offering communities for pre-med and pre-law students.

- Both pre-med communities have 25 students registered, and the pre-law community has 20.
- Each community has at least monthly meetings, with pre-med meeting weekly and pre-law meeting bi-monthly.
- The end-of-year satisfaction ratings for the freshman pre-med communities were qualitative in nature. In response to the question, “Would you recommend the community to other

students?" the responses were split: 50/50. The main objection was the living conditions in McBryde residence hall. Other students commented on the arrangement not being accurately represented initially, lacking in faculty involvement, information about transitioning to college, and more rigorous academics.

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- **Initiative 2(b)** - Provide orientation seminar for pre-professional students.

- **Action Plan** - Market Orientation to students.
 - **KPI** - Send postcards to pre-med and pre-law students by July 15.
 - **KPI** - Add to OPPA website calendar of events by July 15.
 - **KPI** - Distribute orientation information on Scholars Day.

The pre-professional orientations are offered during Welcome Week in the fall. They provide the freshmen the opportunity to become familiar with the OPPA and its services, other student services on campus, and introduction to relevant student organizations. The sessions also serve as a motivator for freshmen. These programs have been well-attended and have received positive feedback from attendees.

- All of these items were accomplished last summer.

- **Action Plan** - Host pre-med and pre-law orientations.
 - **KPI** - Attendance of at least 80 pre-med and 40 pre-law students at respective orientations.
 - **KPI** - Include presentations by medical school/law school faculty.
 - **KPI** - Include presentations by representatives of respective student organizations.

- The pre-med orientation drew 110 students, the pre-law orientation 42
- The director of medical education at the school of medicine and representatives from four student organizations spoke to the pre-meds students
- Due to a last minute emergency, the director of admissions at the USC School of Law cancelled her presentation to the pre-law students. The OPPA staff members filled in
- The president of Phi Alpha Delta, the pre-law honor society, also spoke to the pre-law students

- **Initiative 2(c)** - Advertise our services to pre-professional students

- **Action Plan** - Visit classes typically populated with pre-med and pre-law students; set up office displays.
 - **KPI** - Provide information about services to at least 1,000 students (live).
 - **KPI** - Presentations at six science classes.
 - **KPI** - Presentations at three political science classes.
 - **KPI** - Tabling four times at satellite locations.
 - **KPI** - One advertisement in Gamecock student newspaper each semester.
 - **KPI** - Provide information to Student Orientation and Testing for summer orientations.

Identification of pre-professional students is key to bringing them into the OPPA. After the PACES camp and orientations, the OPPA reaches out to pre-professional students in many ways. Visiting classes, providing information in several locations on campus, and utilizing other campus offices to introduce students to the OPPA are ways found to attract a significant number of students.

- The OPPA has had more than 1,700 student visits so far this year
 - The number of student visits will be well above the projection.
 - Presentations were made to six science classes, but no political science classes.
 - Tabling has not been done this year due to time constraints; the release of student assistants has increased the staff workload
 - No advertisements were placed in the Gamecock due to budget constraints
 - Information was provided to Orientation and Testing to be included in their packets
- **Initiative 2(d)** - Provide advisement for pre-professional students.
 - **Action Plan** - Provide Drop-In Hours, maintain listserv, advise student groups, maintain website.
 - **KPI** - 2,000 student contacts throughout academic year.
 - **KPI** - Increase students on listservs by .025%.
 - **KPI** - Offer 20 hours of pre-veterinary advising by visiting vet.
 - **KPI** - Create pre-dental listserv.
 - **KPI** - Maintain up-to-date calendar of events on website.

As students are identified, they are placed on appropriate lists to receive information relevant to their interests. Listservs have become the messenger of choice for the advertisement and publicizing of activities, events, and services of the OPPA. As the result of student suggestions on the most recent office satisfaction survey, lists have been created for specific health careers as opposed to the former “pre-med” list, which had been used to advertise all health professions information.

- Student visits, classroom visits, events and workshops have yielded over 3,000 student contacts so far this year
 - The listservs were purged of 183 outdated email addresses bringing the total number of students down to 2,300. Another 332 emails have been added to the listservs this year as well, which yields a net increase of .056%
 - Calendar of events does not reflect all events and activities; had been updated by a student assistant who was cut from the budget.
- **Action Plan** - Advise Student Groups.
 - **KPI** - Serve as advisor to Phi Alpha Delta.
 - **KPI** - Serve as advisor to Pre-Dental Club.

- **KPI** - Serve as advisor to Pre-Vet Club.
- **KPI** - Serve as advisor to Gamma Beta Phi.
- **KPI** - Serve as advisor to Association for Minority Pre-health Students.

Student organizations provide yet another source of support and camaraderie for students, but also the opportunity to become actively involved in the interests of their choice, and develop leadership and teamwork skills, and exposure to diversity, so necessary in many aspects of their current and future pursuits.

The staff of the OPPA advises the above organizations and a new one:
Health Occupations Students Association (HOSA)

- **Initiative 2(e)** - Provide initiatives to promote pre-professional student success.

The OPPA provides many opportunities for students to clarify their goals, interact with students and professionals in their area of interest, and develop necessary talents and skills to be more competitive in their pursuits, but also to engage in activities that enhance their education personally, socially, civically, and professionally. The activities outlined in this Initiative have been identified by professional schools, professional school students, and professionals in their respective areas, as key to student success.

- *Initiative 2(e) - Projects*
 - AMCAS Workshop Student Assessment
- **Action Plan** - Provide assistance with the medical, dental, and law school application process.
 - *Action Plan - Projects*
 - AMCAS Workshop Student Assessment
 - **KPI** - Present medical school application workshop to 80 students.
 - *KPI - Projects*
 - AMCAS Workshop Student Assessment
 - **KPI** - Present dental school application workshops to 30 students.
 - **KPI** - Present law school application workshop to 30 students.
 - **KPI** - Workshops will be evaluated and will maintain at least 80% student satisfaction rating of the students' increased understanding of the application process.
 - **KPI** - Provide information about how to write a personal statement to 150 students via website, live presentation, or office visit.
 - **KPI** - Review personal statements of 100 students for content and interest and offer comments and suggestions.
 - **KPI** - Perform mock interviews for 80 students and offer comments and/or suggestions for improvement.

- Medical and dental school application workshops presented to 65 students
- Law school application workshop had 39 participants
- Personal statement workshop held for 44 students
- Counter has not been established for visits to the website's personal statement presentation
- 145 personal statements reviewed by the OPPA (+ 45%)
- Mock interviews performed for 68 students so far this year (- 15%)

- **Action Plan** - Establish a means to evaluate the personal statement and mock interview services.
 - **KPI** - Begin to design a practical form of assessment using StudentVoice.
 - Satisfaction of services was assessed using a StudentVoice questionnaire
 - Mock interview service received 91.67% satisfaction rating
 - Personal statement assistance received a 88.46% rating

- **Initiative 2(f)** - Provide opportunities for career goal clarification and development.
 - **Action Plan** - Host pre-professional career fairs.
 - **KPI** - Host law school fair with at least 20 law school representatives.
 - **KPI** - Host health careers fair with 20 program representatives.
 - **KPI** - Attendance of at least 200 students at each fair.
 - **KPI** - Collect written evaluations from program representatives regarding the value of their visit to campus.
 - Law school fair engaged representatives from 22 law schools
 - Health careers fair was cancelled due to poor response from school representatives (budget decreases for travel)
 - 160 students counted; difficult to measure due to location of event (Russell House 2nd Floor Lobby)
 - Written evaluations received from law school representatives were favorable, with suggestions only to improve parking options

 - **Action Plan** - Promote MedView shadowing program to students.
 - **KPI** - Send information to students via listserv and flyers four times during the academic year.
 - **KPI** - 200 students will have registered with the MedView program.
 - **KPI** - 100 students will shadow professionals during the academic year.
 - Information about shadowing program went out to listserv twice; flyers were hung at various bulletin boards
 - 343 students have registered with MedView
 - 117 students have shadowed physicians thus far

 - **Action Plan** - Develop Pre-Law Certificate program.
 - **KPI** - Establish committee of staff, faculty and students representing pre-law interests.

- **KPI** - Develop requirements for successful completion of the certificate based on similar programs.
- **KPI** - Plan to implement certificate program next academic year.

- Pre-law advisory committee invitations have been sent, with 6 faculty/staff accepting
- Survey of 12 southeastern law school admissions representatives indicated less than favorable opinions about pre-law certificate program.
- Advisory committee will be apprised of survey results and determine course of action

- **Action Plan** - Provide presentations by admissions representatives of state-funded med and law schools.

- **KPI** - 60 students will attend visit by med school admissions representatives.
- **KPI** - 20 students will attend visit by law school admissions representative.
- **KPI** - Programs will be evaluated for student satisfaction of increased understanding of application process.
- **KPI** - Evaluation will demonstrate an 80% satisfaction rating for increased understanding.

- 41 students turned in evaluations for med school visit, many students left without submitting
- Law school reps at orientation and UNIV 401A class, total of 60 student attendees
- Evaluation of med school rep's visit indicated satisfaction rating of 4.86/5 approval, or 97%.

- **Action Plan** - Continue to work collaboratively with local hospitals and physicians' offices to provide community service and experiential learning opportunities for pre-medical students.

- **KPI** - Meet with volunteer coordinators at local hospitals.
- **KPI** - Place 20 students in Lexington Medical Center's program.

- Met with volunteer coordinators from Lexington Medical Center, Palmetto Health Baptist
- Number of students placed at LMC not yet available

- **Goal No. 3** - Develop and practice methods of assessment that guide improvements and enhance student success and satisfaction.

As the OPPA's ability to enhance student success depends on appropriate and effective guidance, assessment is crucial to ensure that the best practices are in place to that end. With budget cuts and

significantly more transparency and accountability, it is the responsibility of the staff of the OPPA to ensure successful and efficient choice of educational and advisory methods. A plan is in place to measure program effectiveness, student satisfaction, and success of the pre-professional students at USC. As was indicated in the most recent annual report, the acceptance rate of USC students to medical and law school surpassed the national rates. **With the medical school applicants scoring lower than the national average on MCAT scores and GPA, and surpassing the national average in acceptance, the services of the OPPA may be preparing USC students better than most schools in the non-academic portion of the application.** For acceptance to medical school the non-academic factors, such as health care exposure, leadership opportunities, and other life experiences, are crucial for admission. The availability of these activities through the OPPA and other offices on campus may be directly influencing acceptance rates.

- *Goal No. 3 - Projects*
 - AMCAS Workshop Student Assessment
- *Goal No. 3 - Contributes to*
 - Student Affairs & Academic Support
 - **Strategic Goal No. 4** - Develop and practice methods of research and assessment that guide improvements enhancing student success and satisfaction.
- **Initiative 3(a)** - Determine whether OPPA's initiatives are having the desired effects on students.
 - *Initiative 3(a) - Projects*
 - AMCAS Workshop Student Assessment
 - **Action Plan** - Develop outcomes assessments for PACES camp and application workshops.
 - *Action Plan - Projects*
 - AMCAS Workshop Student Assessment
 - **KPI** - Administer a pre and post test assessing knowledge attainment of important preparation and application concepts for PACES students.
 - **KPI** - Administer an outcomes survey at application workshops developed using StudentVoice.
 - *KPI - Projects*
 - AMCAS Workshop Student Assessment

Pre- and Post-tests were administered to PACES students to determine if the camp was effective in meeting the learning outcomes. The paired *t* test indicated a P value less than .0001, which is considered extremely statistically significant. Two of the six AMCAS workshops were assessed through StudentVoice. Of the seven items, only two rated below 91% positive. Those were location of event and time of event. The event, however, was offered six different days, at different times and locations.

- **Action Plan** - Determine students' perception of the quality of OPPA services.
 - **KPI** - Administer a satisfaction survey to students developed by using StudentVoice.
 - **KPI** - Maintain satisfaction rating of 80%.

StudentVoice project assessing student satisfaction of the OPPA indicated that 88% of respondents said the office had been "extremely helpful" or "very helpful." 98% of respondents said they would recommend the office to a friend.

- **Action Plan** - Explore the possibility of using focus groups to assess upper-class students' knowledge about important preparation and application concepts.
 - **KPI** - Research StudentVoice and other professional publications regarding the use of focus groups.

Discussions about the use of focus groups have been initiated within the OPPA. StudentVoice has not yet been involved.

- **Initiative 3(b)** - Identify programs that do not meet assessment KPIs.
 - **Action Plan** - Improve and enhance programs as necessary.
 - **KPI** - Examine and improve programs with satisfaction ratings of less than 80%
Revise programs whose knowledge-based outcome results are not statistically significant Add a “suggestion box” component to website.

Items under review include the Living and Learning Communities, which may need more guidance and oversight, website updates, number of students who requested mock interviews, and types of assessment performed.

- **Goal No. 4** - Encourage students to engage in collaborative activities with faculty and the community.

- *Goal No. 4 - Contributes to*
 - Student Affairs & Academic Support
 - **Strategic Goal No. 7** - Support the academic mission of the University by encouraging faculty and students to engage and collaborate in teaching and learning opportunities that enhance academic studies.

Not only important for their successful entry into professional school, but also to enhance available number and type of opportunities and receive diverse types of guidance and viewpoints, faculty and community involvement provide much-needed exposure to diversity.

- **Initiative 4(a)** - Enhance collaboration with faculty.
 - **Action Plan** - Encourage student/faculty interaction.
 - **KPI** - Invite faculty to present at orientations.
 - **KPI** - Explain to students the importance of good faculty relations for future letters of recommendation

- Science faculty spoke at pre-med orientation; law school faculty invited to speak at orientation, but cancelled
- Students consistently encouraged at orientations, workshops, in handbooks, and during individual advising, to work closely with faculty to access their expertise, discover new opportunities, and secure future letters of recommendation.
- Currently working with science faculty to research viability of an MCAT review course.
- Pre-Law Advisory Committee includes faculty members.

- **Action Plan** - Encourage students to become actively involved with faculty.
 - **KPI** - Continue to refer students to Office of Undergraduate Research.
 - **KPI** - Continue to refer qualified students to Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs.

Referrals made to qualified students to Fellowship and Scholars Programs;
frequent referrals made to Undergraduate Research

- **Action Plan** - Continue to work with academic advisors.
 - **KPI** - Meet with science faculty at faculty meeting.
 - **KPI** - Send letter to academic departments outlining services of the office.
 - OPPA has established a regular meeting with the undergraduate director in biology, but found it difficult to attend faculty meetings
 - Letter to advisors is in progress