

# Three Characteristics of the Admissions Process

**Dr. James Scott Wright**

Executive Director

Texas Medical and Dental Schools

Application Service





# Three Characteristics

- Foundational to the Admissions Process
- Help students to understand how and why things happen
- Generally give a context for how applicants will be evaluated
- Each school varies in the specifics



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MEDICAL. DENTAL. VETERINARY.



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**Competitive**

**Personal**

**Altruistic**



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# Competitive



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# Competitive

- Many applications - more than 6000 for medical schools in 2019
- Large percentage are “qualified”
- More applicants than positions available
- More “qualified” applicants than seats
- Therefore, you are “competing” for a place in a professional school class



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# Competitive

- This characteristics lends itself well to evaluating applicants' numbers
- Clearly a quantitative factor in the admissions process
- Numbers show your academic ability and your skill in utilizing knowledge
- Allows schools to reduce the size of their viable pool of applicants



# Competitive

- What numbers are important?
  - Grade point average
  - Standardized test score(s)
- Grade point average
  - Numerous GPAs are evaluated
    - Cumulative (everything you've ever taken)
    - Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math (BCPM)
    - Non-BCPM courses
  - All grades count, all attempts, no +/-

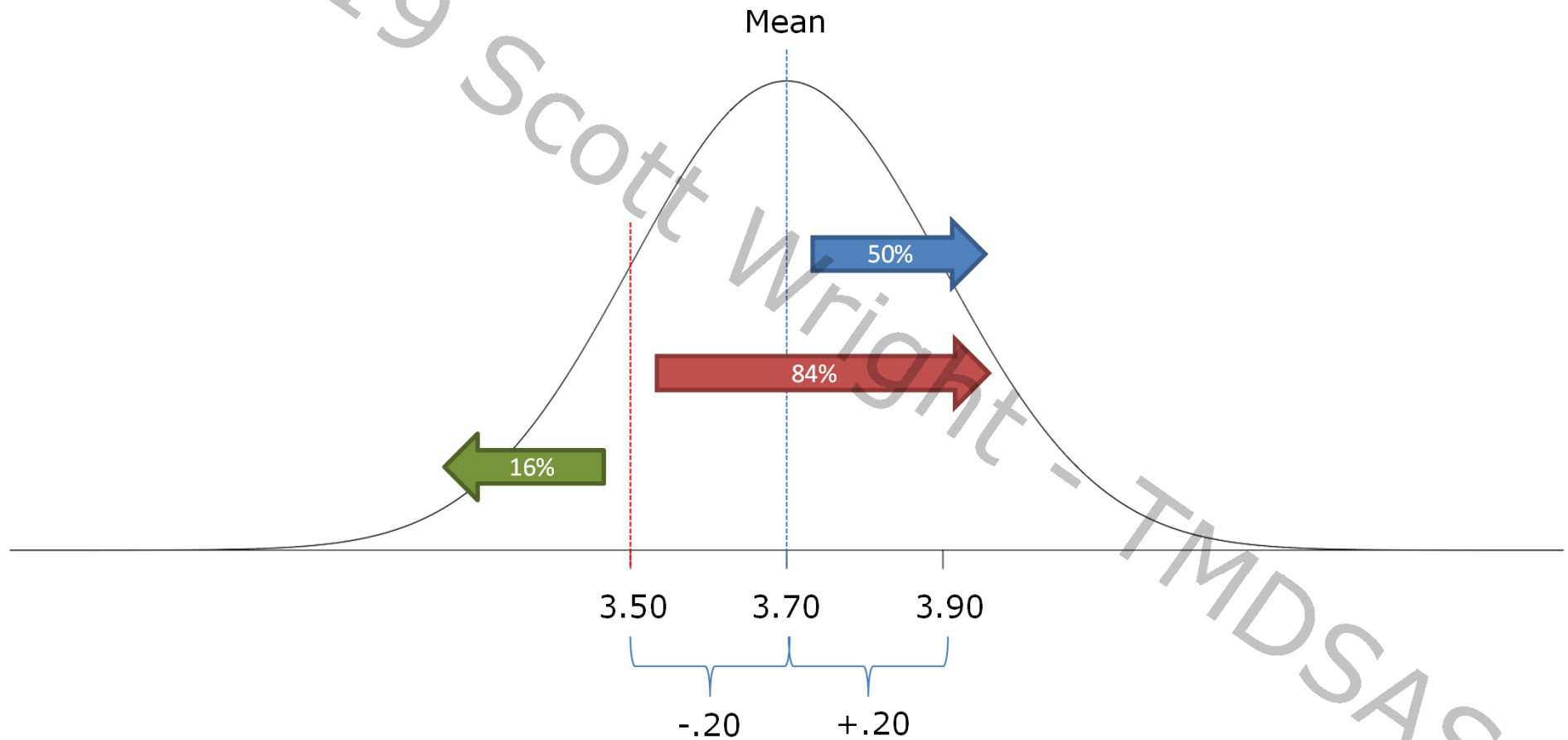


# Grade Point Average

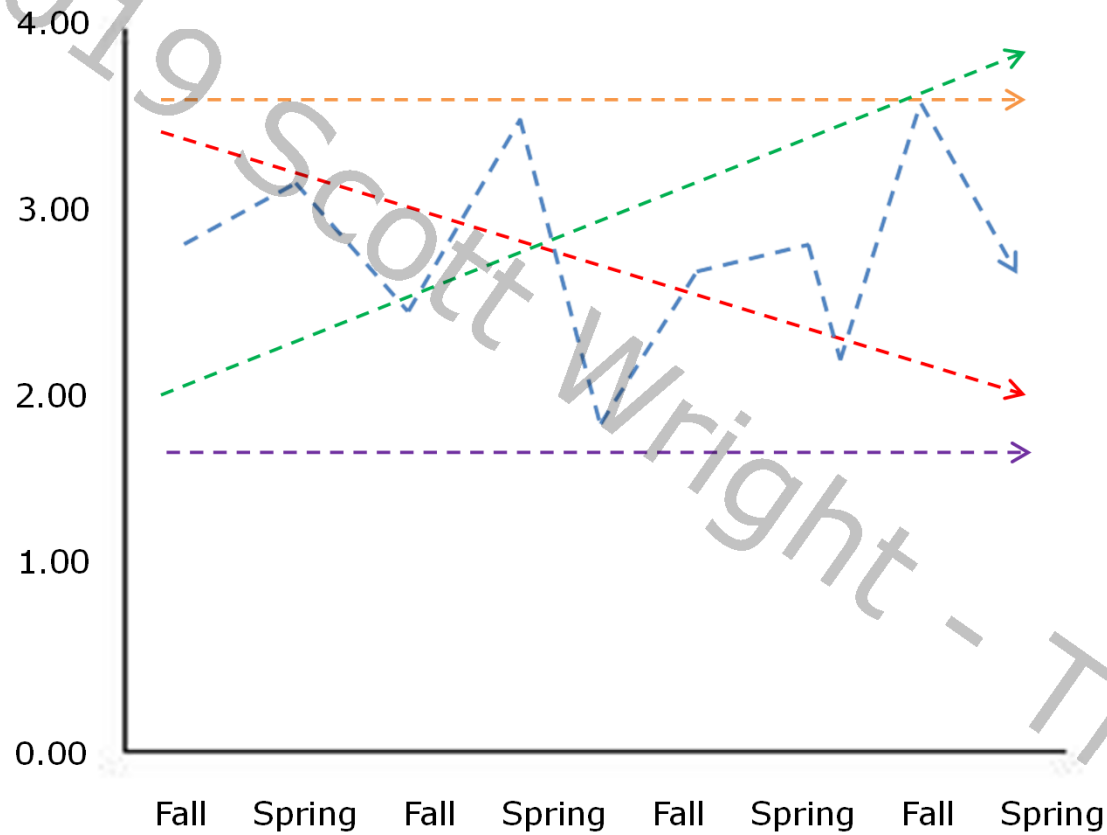
- In Texas, average overall GPA is typically around 3.70
- Definition of average
- 50 percent have above a 3.70
- Standard deviation is usually about .20
- What does this really mean?



# © Grade Point Average - Medical

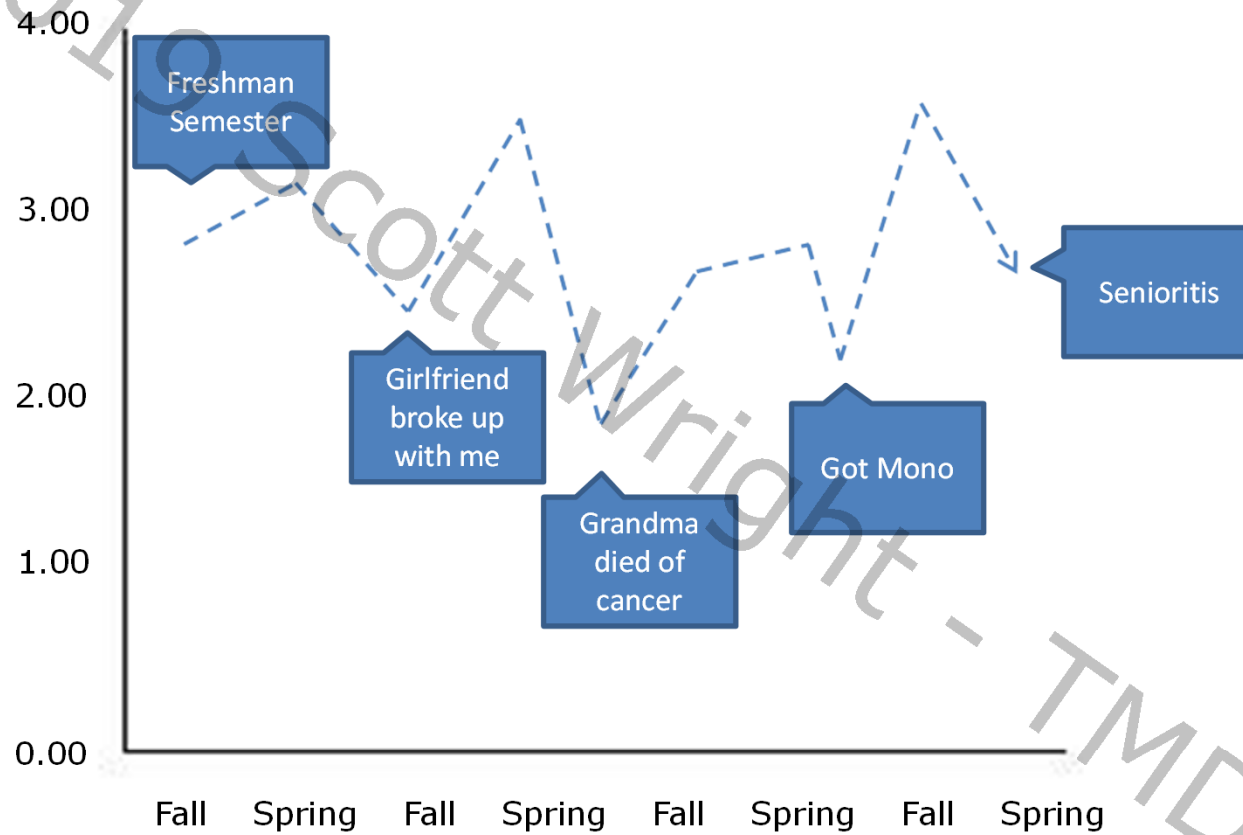


# GPA Trends





# GPA Trends

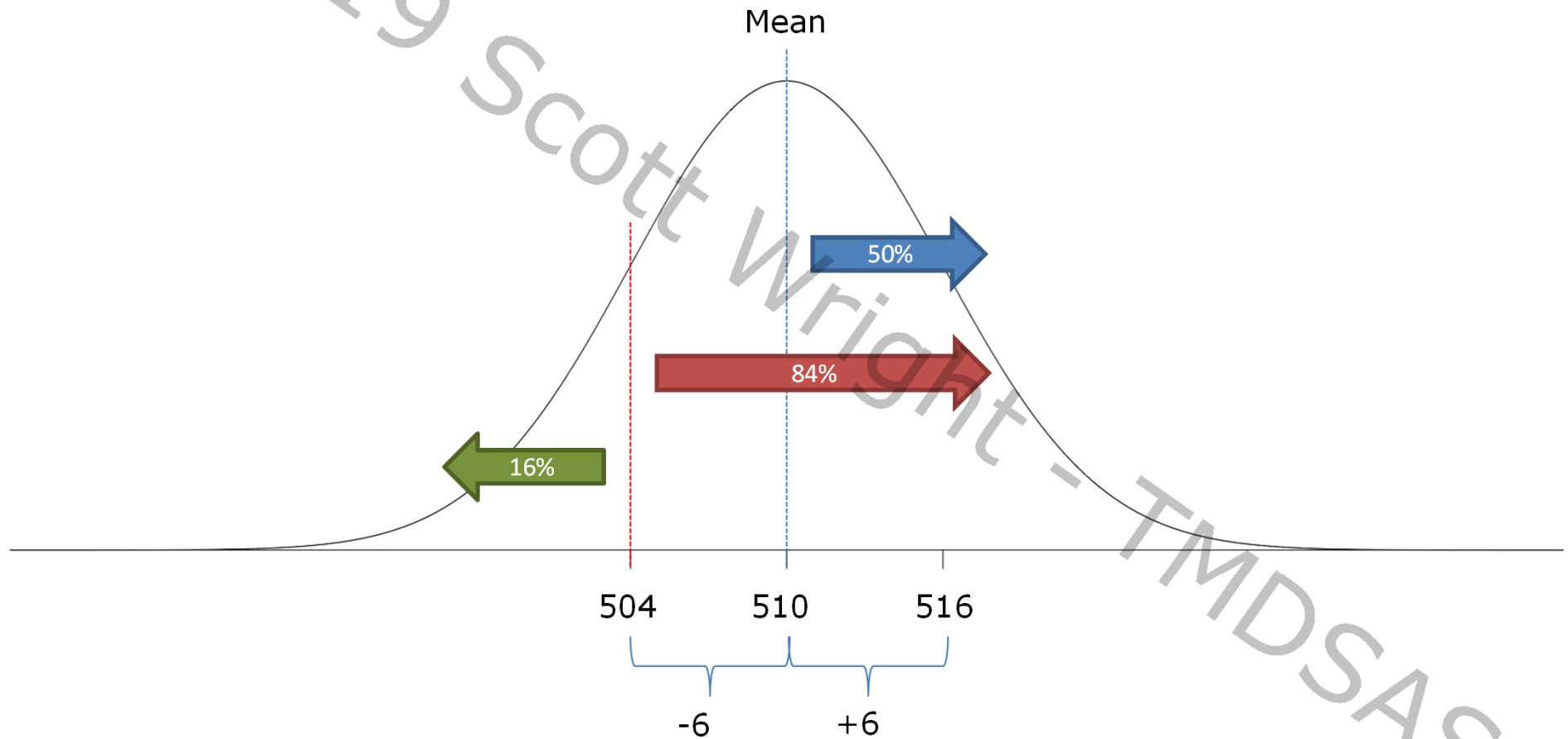


# Standardized Tests

- What about standardized test scores?
- For example, MCAT
- Averages, in Texas, are about 510
- Standard deviation is about 6 points



# © Standardized Tests – MCAT





# Take Home Messages

- What should this characteristic of the admissions process mean to **you**?
- **Study hard**, make good grades, learn
- Be **consistent**
- If GPA trouble at first, work to **improve**
- **Prepare** for standardized tests
  - Knowledge, test taking skills, emotional stamina



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# Personal



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# Personal

- Defined:
  - “relating to, directed to, or intended for a particular person”
  - Synonyms: individual, intimate
- Each school has objective criteria and methodologies
- But ultimately, an individual and personal approach to your application will be taken
  - Current term in use is “holistic admissions”



# Personal

- No statistical charts here
- Reading the application, evaluating the intuitive elements of what you say
- Personal Statements, evaluation letters, and activity descriptions
- Seeking to understand who you are and what makes you tick





# Personal

- Schools get to know who you are, in part, by what you have done
- Where you spend your time
  - Volunteer work
  - Campus organizations
  - Health-related activities
  - Research efforts
- As well as your hobbies, personal interests





# Personal

What are the personal qualities that health professions schools value?

## Inter-personal Qualities

- Service Orientation
- Social Skills
- Cultural Competence
- Teamwork
- Oral Communication

## Intra-personal Qualities

- Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others
- Reliability and Dependability
- Resilience and Adaptability
- Capacity for Improvement





# Take Home Messages

- Who you are and where do your **passions** lie?
- Don't necessarily do something because you want to **check off some box** to say you did it
- Discussing this in the application...
  - Focus on the “**so what**” more than simply the “**what**” of your activities
  - Depth of **meaning** and **value**
- Create your “**brand**” – and then **market** that brand





# Marketing Your Brand

- Marketing defined:
  - A coordinated series of steps that include promotion of a product through different mediums using a variety of different types of advertisements.
- The “product” is YOU
- Mediums = elements of the admissions process
- Various adv. types can be wide ranging



## Anatomy of a Good Marketing Campaign





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Wright

- TMDSAS

**Altruistic**



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# Altruistic

- What does this word mean?
- From the Latin for “other”
- It means to focus your attention on others
- Opposite of being focused on yourself (egoistic)
- This is what we all want out of our healthcare providers...right?



©

2019

15

14

**“The Story of Me?”**  
**Staring: Me**  
**Directed by: Me**  
**Produced by: Me**

15

14





# Altruistic

- The admissions process seeks to understand your **motivations**
- Are they selfish? Or **Selfless**?
- What have you done and what do you say that reflects an “**others-oriented**” perspective?
- Goals of the professional schools
  - A class that works well together – **teamwork**
  - Healthcare providers that **benefit others specifically and society in general**





# Take Home Messages

- How do you reflect this in your application?
- Activities
  - Humanitarian volunteering
  - Social action efforts
  - Tutoring others
  - Even religious work
- Personal motivation statement
  - Why you want to be a healthcare provider
  - What is at the base of your reasons





Personal  
Attributes  
displayed  
in  
interview

Letter Writers'  
Comments

Personal  
Statements/Essays

Activity  
Lists

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**Competitive**

**Personal**

**Altruistic**



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# Questions



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# **CRAFTING A COMPETITIVE APPLICATION**

Felix G. Morales, M.D.

Associate Dean of Admissions

Associate Professor in Family and Community Medicine

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

School of Medicine

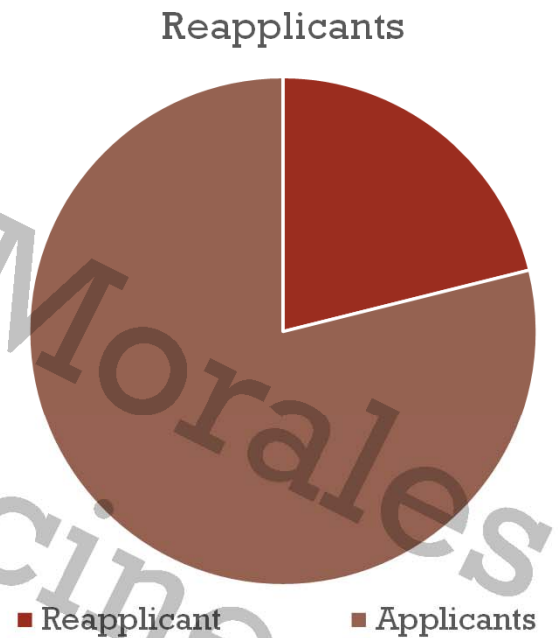
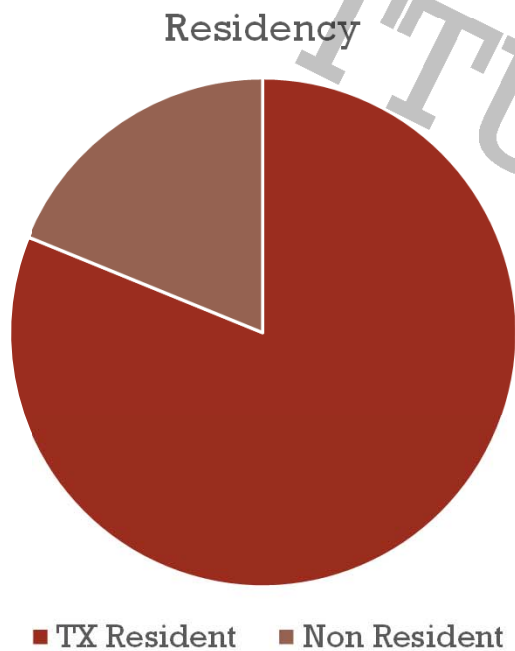


# OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the Applicant Pool
- Holistic Review
- Common Mistakes
- Overcoming Blemished Metrics
- Interview
- Personal Statement
- Summary Points
- Texas Tech School of Medicine



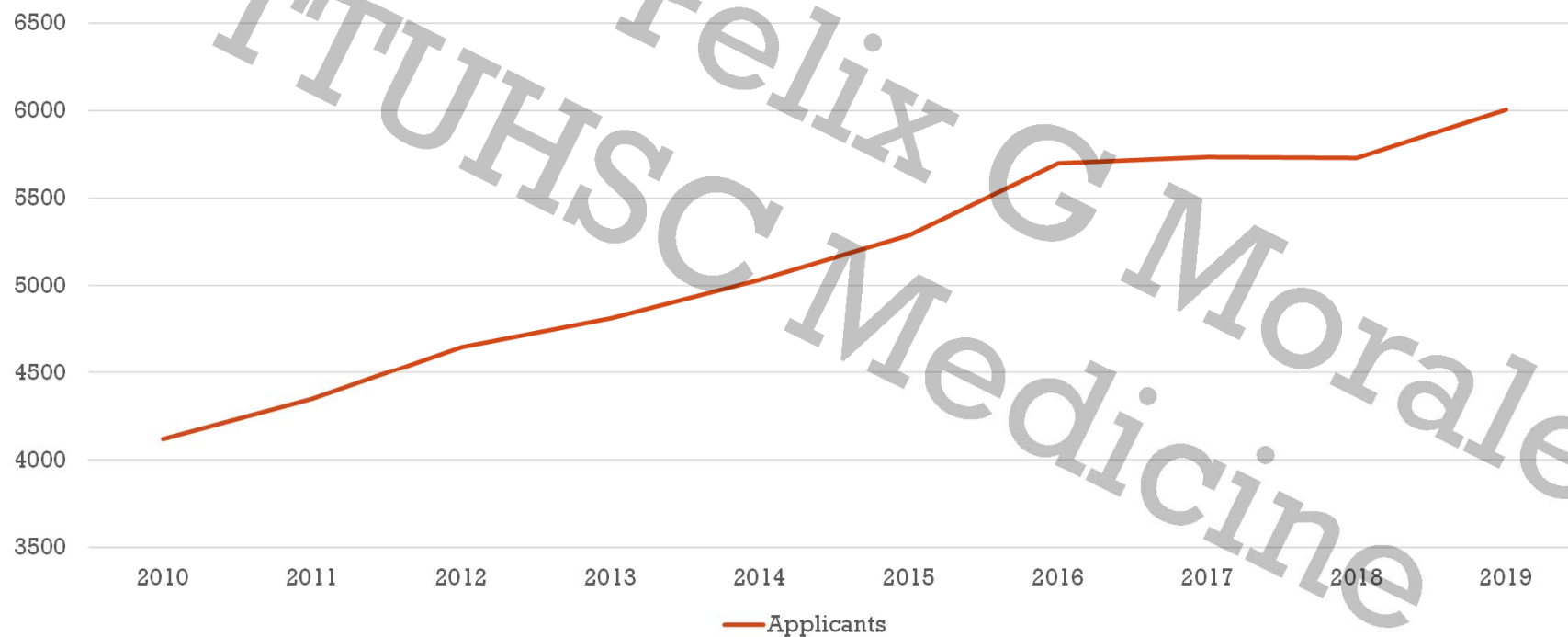
# UNDERSTANDING THE APPLICANT POOL EY2019





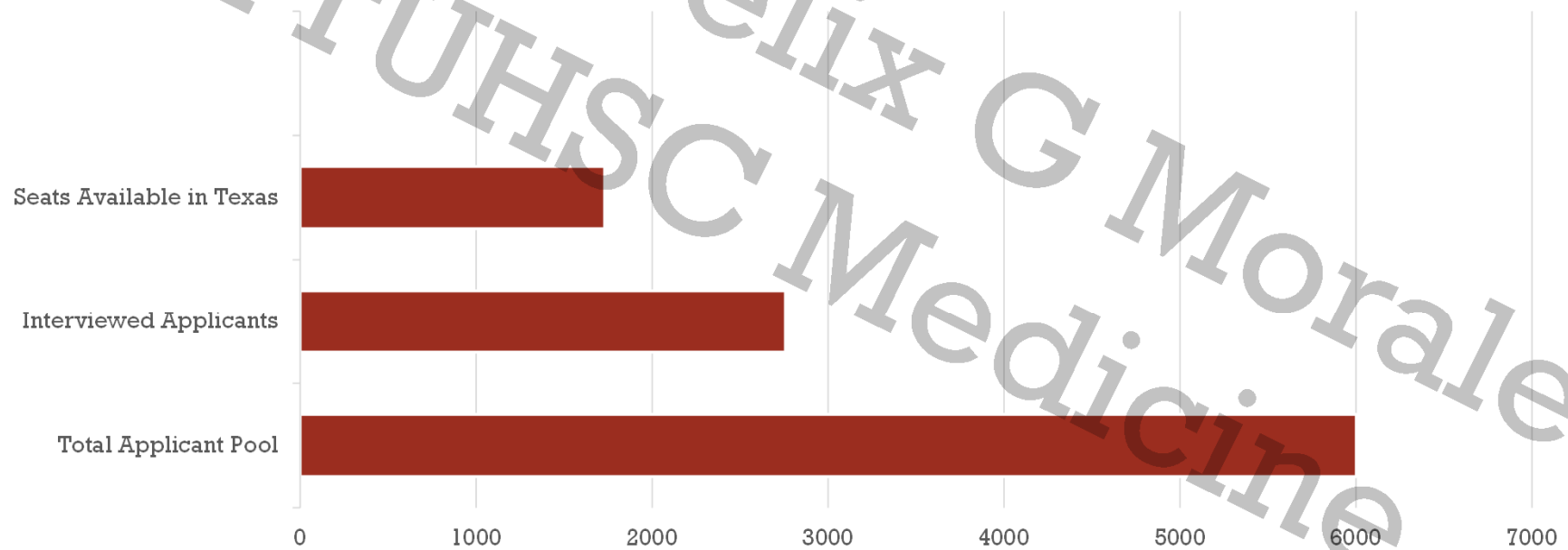
# GROWTH

Total Medical School Applications | TMDSAS



# MATRICULATES

EY2019 Final Application Statistics | TMDSAS



# “AVERAGE” TTUHSC APPLICANT – EY2018

## Overall

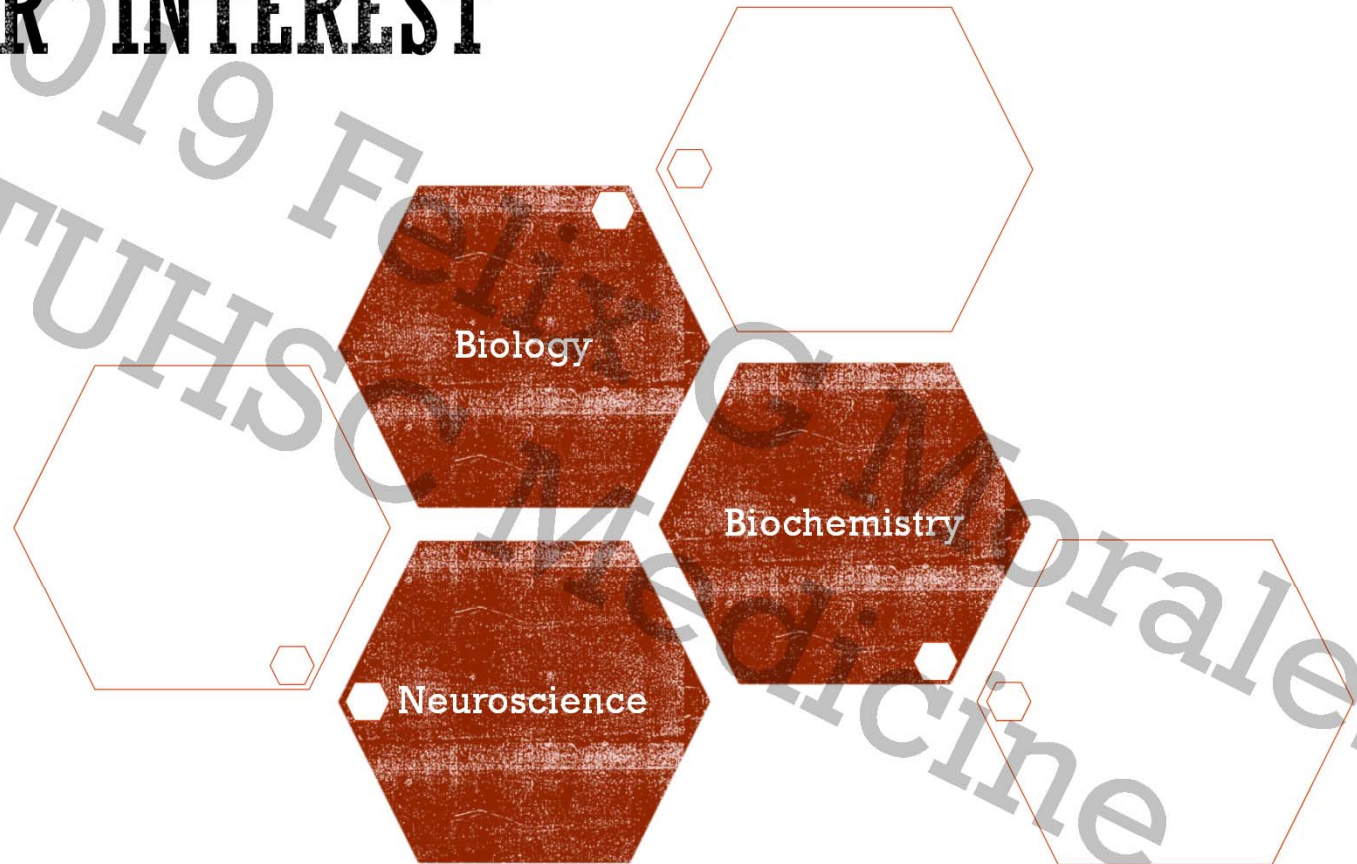
- MCAT
  - 507
- GPA
  - Overall - 3.74
  - BCPM - 3.64

## Out of State

- MCAT
  - 513
- GPA
  - Overall – 3.84
  - BCPM – 3.77



# OF “MAJOR” INTEREST



# GRADUATE APPEAL



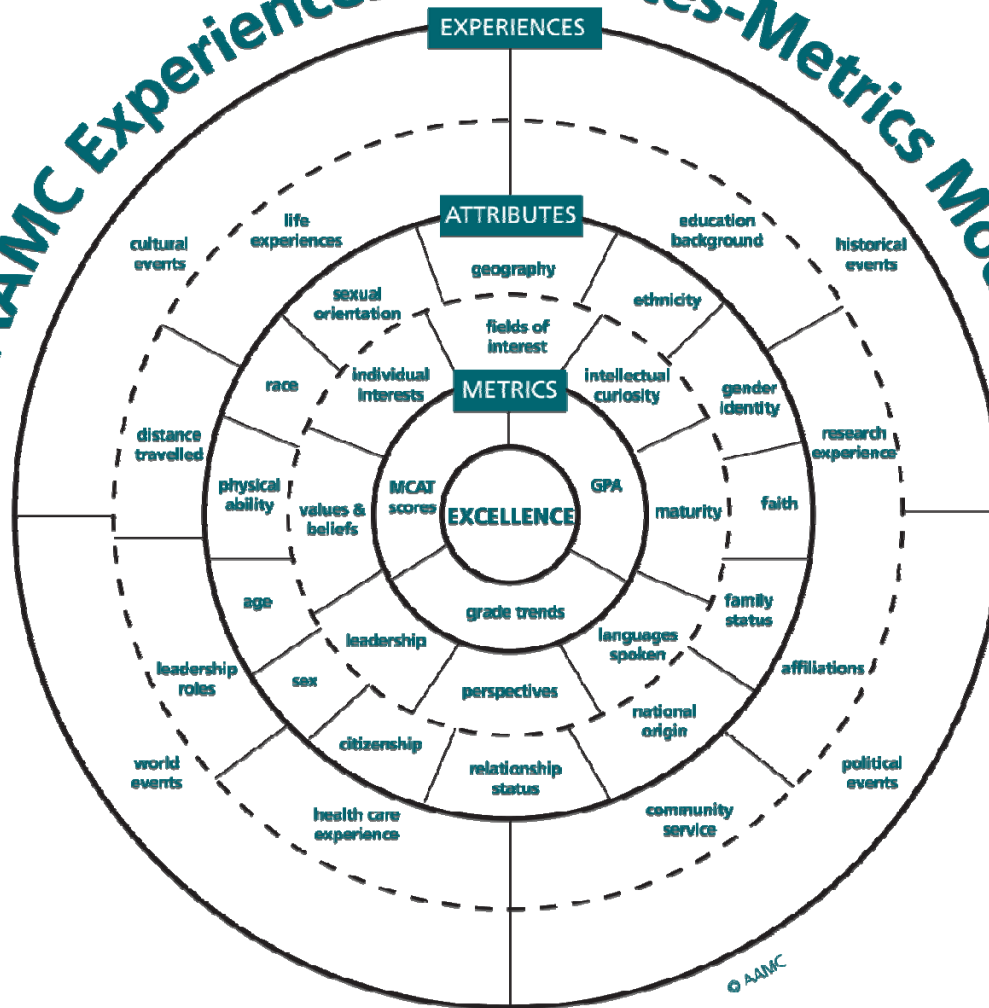
# THE VALUE OF A HOLISTIC REVIEW

- Understand medical schools have different areas they emphasize and areas they will consider more highly.
- Looking beyond the numbers.
- We highly value students with varied and diverse experiences.
  - Provides a positive impact on student learning and interaction.
- It is our goal to produce the best possible physician by placing emphasis and importance on medical education.





# AAMC Experiences-Attributes-Metrics Model



Adapted from *Workforce America: Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource*, McGraw Hill Publishing, 1990.



# AREAS OF INTEREST





# MOST COMMON MISTAKES

- Viewing “submit” as the finish line.
- Taking the MCAT before fully prepared.
- Failure to account for processing times (i.e. MCAT, TMDSAS, AMCAS, Letters of Recommendation).
- **Applying late in the cycle!**
- Taking too long to complete the secondary application.
- Applying before creating a comprehensive application.
- Texas HB 1508
  - Texas state law requires entities providing education programs leading to an initial occupational license to notify each applicant or enrollee: if convicted of certain criminal offenses it may render that person ineligible for a license....



# OVERCOMING ACADEMIC ADVERSITY

- Strong MCAT Score
- BCPM GPA
- Upward Grade Trend
- Post Baccalaureate Program
- Graduate Program



# PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Blinded Interview
- Semi Blinded Interview
- Multiple Mini Interviews
- Panel Interviews
- Length of Interview
- Situational Behavioral Questions



# PERSONAL STATEMENT - IMPORTANCE

- Aspect of application that will be truly “unique”.
- Only opportunity to speak directly to admissions committee members.
- Poor execution can result in unfavorable consequences.



# PERSONAL STATEMENT - PURPOSE

- Discuss how committed you are in achieving your goal.
- Strategic placement of ideas and topics in anticipation for interview.
- Your personal campaign



# PERSONAL STATEMENT - DEVELOPMENT

- What is your motivation?
- Was there an “A-ha” moment?
- Provide evidence: “Love of science” and “Desire to help people.”
  - Is it clear without using these statements?
- Avoid summarizing application



# SUMMARY

- Freshman
  - Start creating a roadmap
  - Build relationships with potential letter of recommendation writers
  - Stay focused- "Put blinders on to the outside world."
  - Grades!
- Sophomores
  - Reevaluate goals and grades
  - Become active in the community- "Be leaders."
  - Shadowing
- Juniors
  - Start MCAT Prep
  - Finalizing letter of recommendations
  - Fill in deficits in application, i.e. research
- Seniors
  - Completing application
  - Casper Test
  - Preparing for interviews
  - Reevaluating competitiveness-Consider graduate/post-bac programs



# QUESTIONS?

*"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference."*

*Robert Frost*





# TEXAS TECH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



# DUAL DEGREES

- FMAT
- MD/PhD
- MD/JD
- MD/MBA
- MD/MPH
- MD/MS



# MATCH RESULTS

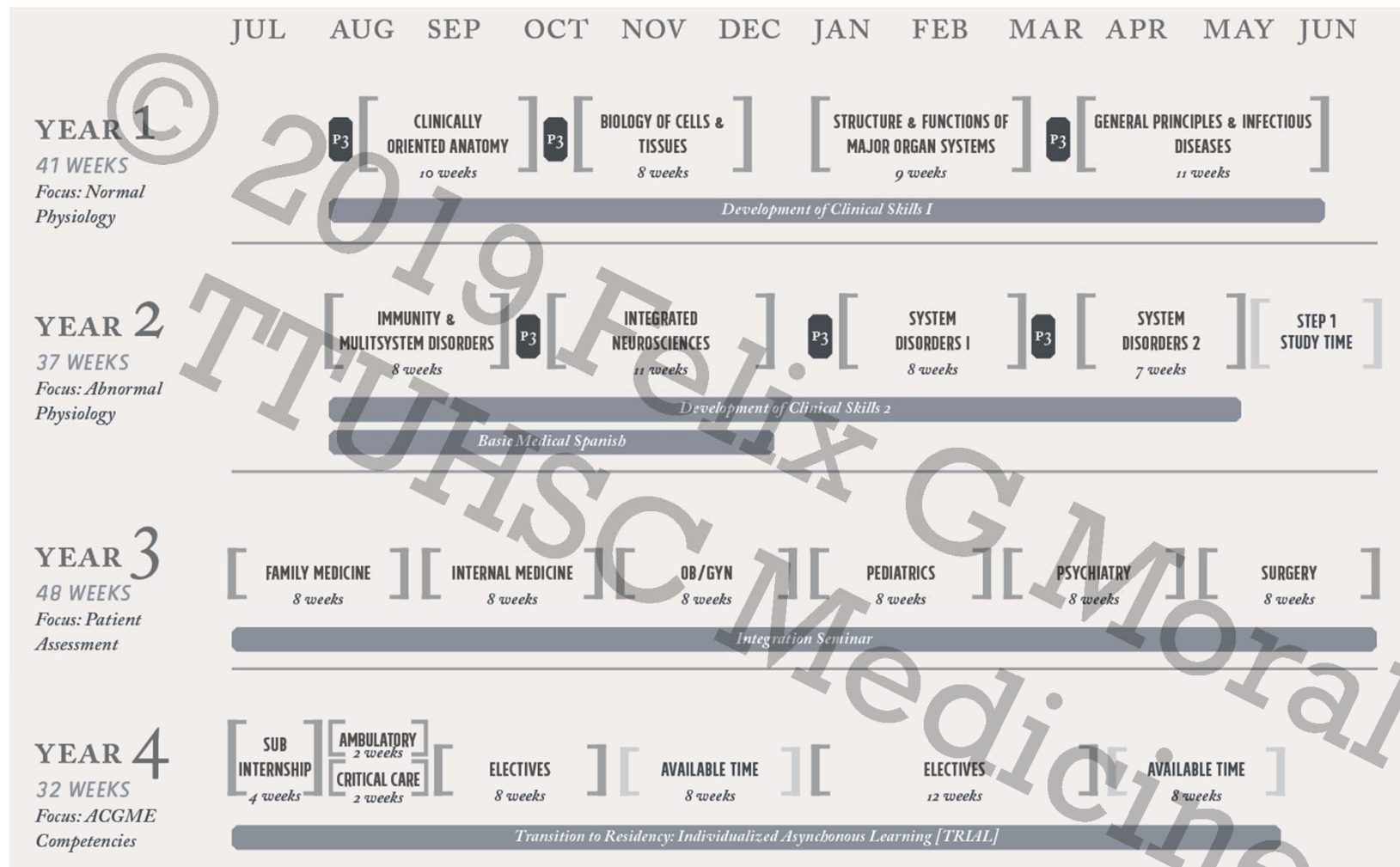
- Most popular residencies for 2018:
  - Family Medicine
  - Internal Medicine
  - Pediatrics
  - Psychiatry
  - Anesthesiology
  - Surgery
- Almost 15% of our students remain at TTUHSC for residency
- 80% match into their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> choice



# PROGRAM STATS

- Class size of 180
- Average MCAT score: 507
- Average Overall GPA: 3.74
- Average Science GPA: 3.64
- Average Step I Test Score: 230 a 98% pass rate
- Average Step II CK Test Score: 243 with 99% pass rate





- Continue curriculum integration with links to Step 1 content
- Link objectives to test questions
- Increase vignette-style test questions





# MULTI-CAMPUS SYSTEM

- First two years spent in Lubbock
- Opportunity to request preferred campus



# LUBBOCK

- University Medical Center
  - 85 Students
  - Level 1 Trauma Center
  - County Hospital
- Covenant Health System
  - 30 students
  - Pediatric Trauma Center
  - Private Hospital



# AMARILLO

- About 50 students
- New School of Medicine building
- New clinical research facilities
- Three teaching hospitals
- Fellowships
- Geriatrics, Women's Health, Rural Obstetrics, and Breast Oncology





# PERMIAN BASIN

- 10-15 students
- Practice at TTUHSC
- Tanglewood Clinic and Mcland Memorial
- Residency programs in Family and Community Medicine, OBGYN, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry



# AMENITIES

- Preston Smith Library
  - 100,000 e-media
  - 29 study rooms
- F. Marie Hall Synergistic Center
  - Study, eat, relax
  - Exercise, sleep
  - Repeat



# STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Student Recreation Center
  - 242,000 square-foot facility
  - Free fitness classes
  - Aquatic center
  - Largest leisure pool on college campus in U.S.
- Intramural Sports
- Texas Tech athletic events



# LUBBOCK, TX

- Lubbock County Population:
- Over 300,000 People
- Texas Tech University
- Restaurants, theatres, shopping, live music venues, outdoor sports, museums and cultural art events
- Low cost of living







# *Personal Growth, Maturity & Professionalism*

*Cultivating an Ethos for Life*

**Dr. James Scott Wright**

Executive Director, Texas Health Education Service

Lead Author, The Maturity Project

# What are We Talking About Today?



Personal Growth



Maturity



Professionalism

Developing the ability to respond to your environment in appropriate ways while considering your personal qualities, social standards and cultural norms.

## Six Characteristics of a Mature Professional

Characteristics: *the basic psycho-social features of healthy living*

Attributes: *individual personality traits*

Related Behaviors: *actions indicative of the personal attributes*

Reflection Opportunity: *provocative statements/questions*



# 1



*Belisarius Begging for Alms* by Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825)



2



*Humility* by Annie Francis Lee (1935-2014)





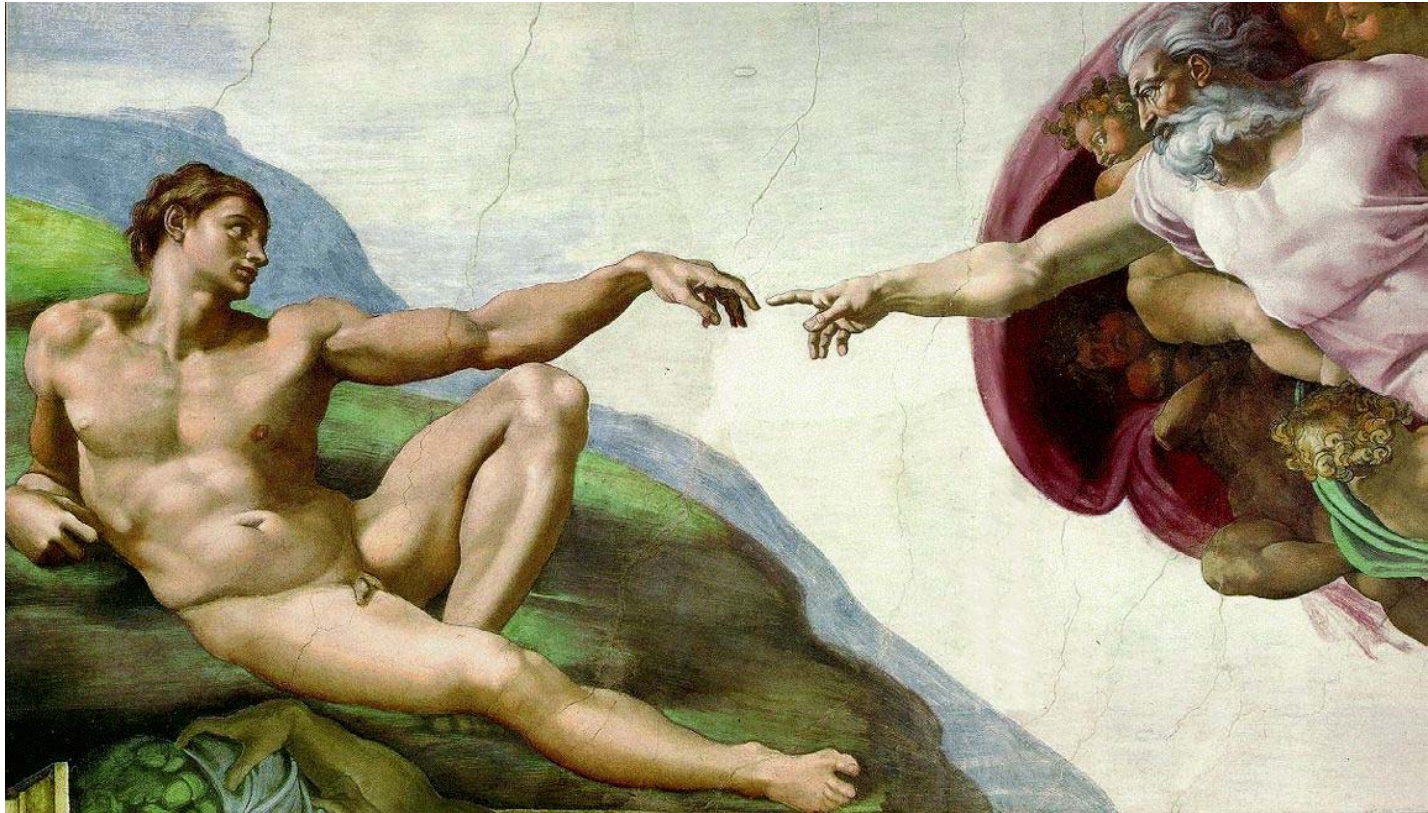
# 3



*Vision of the Mind* by Celeste Jacobs (1967- )



4



*The Creation of Adam* by Michelangelo (1475-1564)





# 5



*Expulsion from Eden* by Mikhail Brussilovsky (1942- )





6



*Autumn Stroll* by Leonid Afremov (1955- )



## The Six Characteristics

- Altruistic
- Humble
- Self Aware
- Autonomous
- Accountable
- Growth Oriented



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TMDSAS

Growing

Mature

Professional





*“Life isn’t about  
finding yourself.  
Life is about  
creating yourself.”*

George Bernard Shaw,  
Irish Playwright  
(1856-1950)





# Quality vs. Quantity

Betsy Jones EdD

Chair, Department of Medical Education

Member, SOM Admissions Selection Committee



**DOME**

Department of Medical Education





# What Medical Schools Want— *An individual who is...*

- Well-rounded
- Capable of handling the academic work
- Knowledgeable & passionate about the medical profession
- Effective in communication
- Altruistic and caring
- Likely to bring a unique perspective



# What Medical Schools Realistically Expect— *An individual who is...*

- Appropriate to his or her age & place in life—
  - ❖ ie, a typical college senior or individual who is serious about seeking a career in medicine





Q vs Q



Quantity

x

Quality





# TMDSAS Employment & Activities

- Academic Recognition
- Non-academic Recognition
- Leadership
- Employment
- Research Activities
- Healthcare Activities
- Community Service
- Extracurricular & Leisure Activities
- Planned Activities



# Academic Recognition/ Non-Academic Recognition/ Leadership

- + Honors
- + Awards
- + Offices
- + Supervision

- Assumption: All recognition is of high quality





Few expectations about employment from interviewers

# Employment

- + Health-related work
- + Demonstrates time management
- + May demonstrate leadership & recognition
- May mitigate less than perfect grades



# Research Activities

Highly  
variable—  
depends on  
your  
interviewer

- ✚ Pertinent to medicine or health
- ✚ Related to a delay between college & med school
- You **MUST** be able to discuss your research activities



# Healthcare Activities

Always  
important

- + Shadowing
- + Volunteering
- Demonstrates your familiarity with medicine
- You MUST be able to discuss your healthcare activities



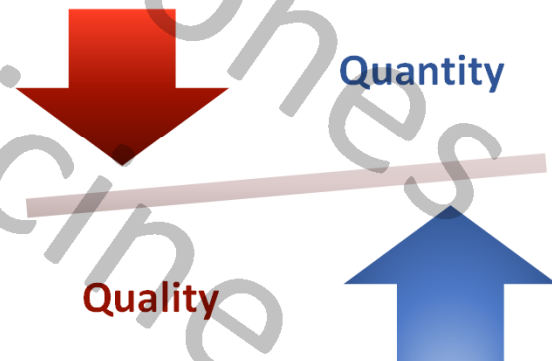




You Decide

# Healthcare Activities

- Shadowed 6 physicians in a single pedi practice, each for ½ day
- Shadowed 1 pediatrician ½ day for 4 months
- Volunteered in hometown NICU over spring break
- Participated in medical mission trip to Nicaragua over spring break





Quantity over  
Quality—  
common pet  
peeve of  
interviewers

# Community Service

- ✚ Pertinent to medicine or health
- ✚ Pertinent to community needs or underserved populations
- ✚ Demonstrates community involvement & leadership
- A long list of charity walks/ runs  $\neq$  quality





You Decide

# Community Service

- Passed out water at Diabetes walk
- Participated in a bake sale to benefit Boys & Girls Club
- Chaired the college homecoming committee
- Delivered for Meals on Wheels





Make sure that  
your FB page  
gives the right  
vibe

## Extracurricular & Leisure Activities

### + Should point to:

- + Commitment
- + Hard Work
- + Team Work
- + Diversity
- + Balance

- Be able to discuss & show commitment, but not at the expense of interest in medicine

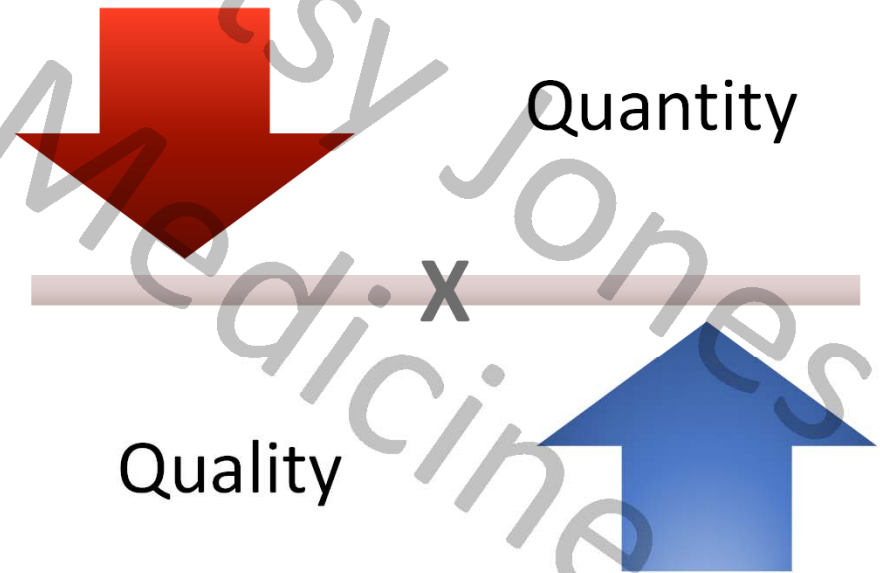




Might be more important early in the application season

## Planned Activities

- + Address gaps
- + More health-related work
- + Travel
- May be interesting to interviewers



# Take-Home Points



- Quality is always more important than quantity if it means depth of experience
- You should be able to discuss every entry, demonstrating your enthusiasm, any outcomes & what you learned
- Consider the link between your major activities and your future role as a physician:
  - In what way did that activity help you develop skills related to *patient care, communication, professionalism, health care systems, teamwork, empathy, ethical decision-making, time management, resiliency, or handling stress?*





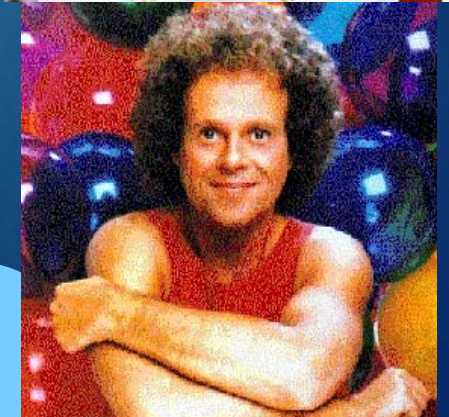
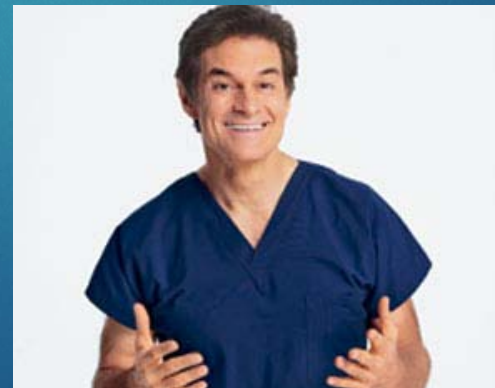
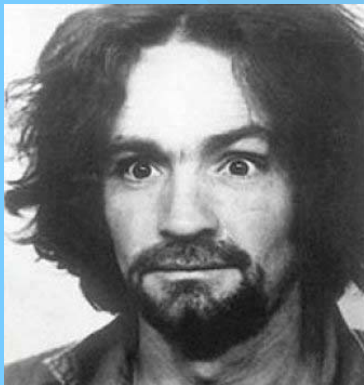
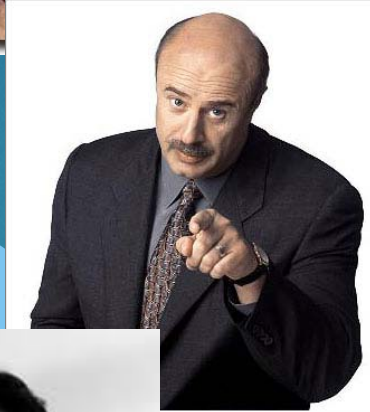
# Misinformation and Disinformation: The role of “fake news” on the application path

R. RUSSELL WILKE – DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY  
ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY





# False Prophets?







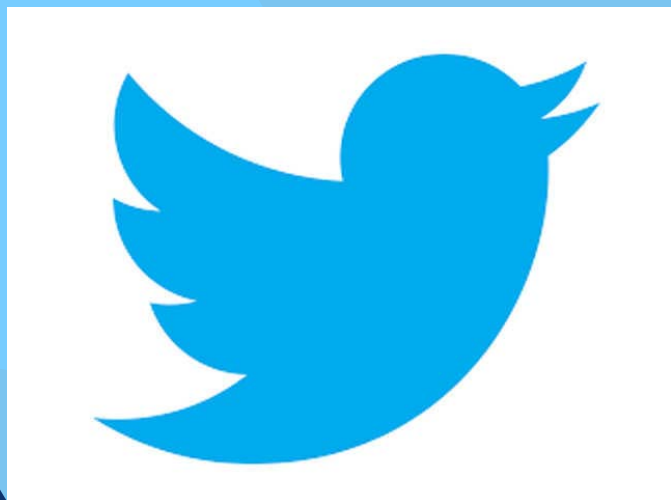
**BEWARE**  
of  
**FALSE PROPHETS**

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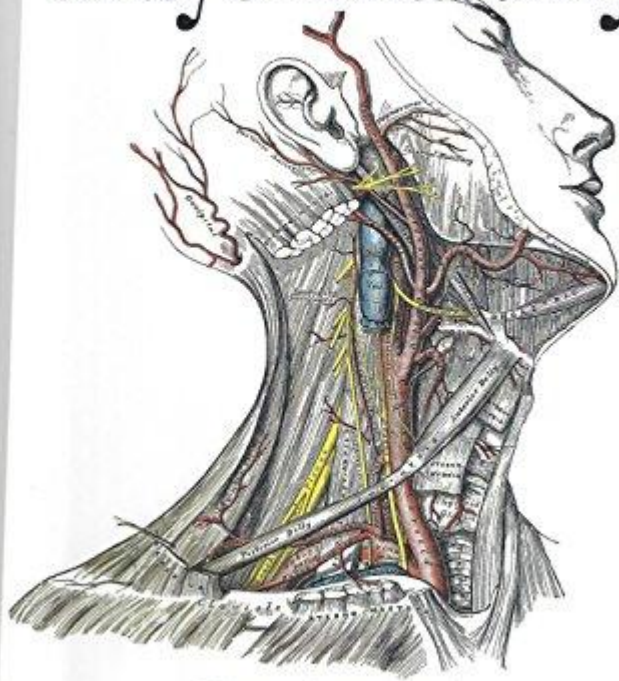
# Common Sources of Misinformation in the applications process



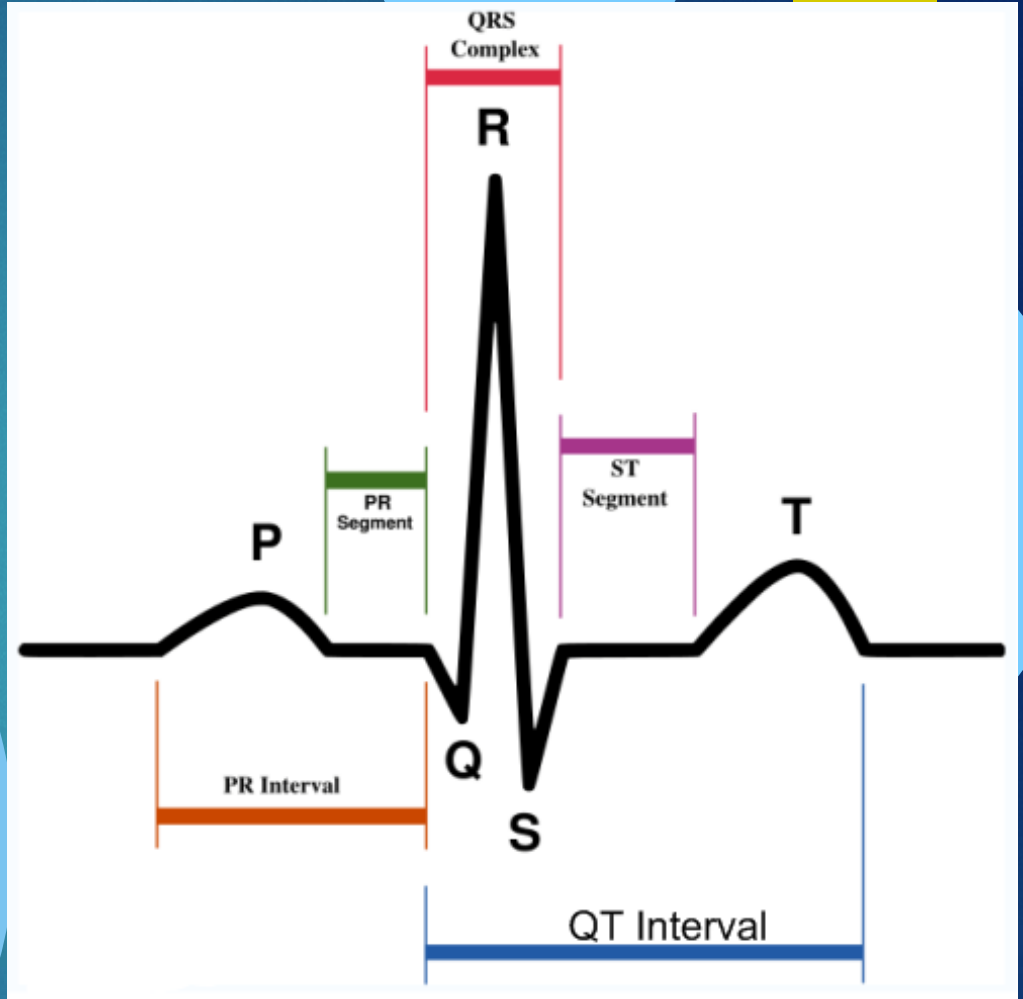
WIKIPEDIA  
*The Free Encyclopedia*



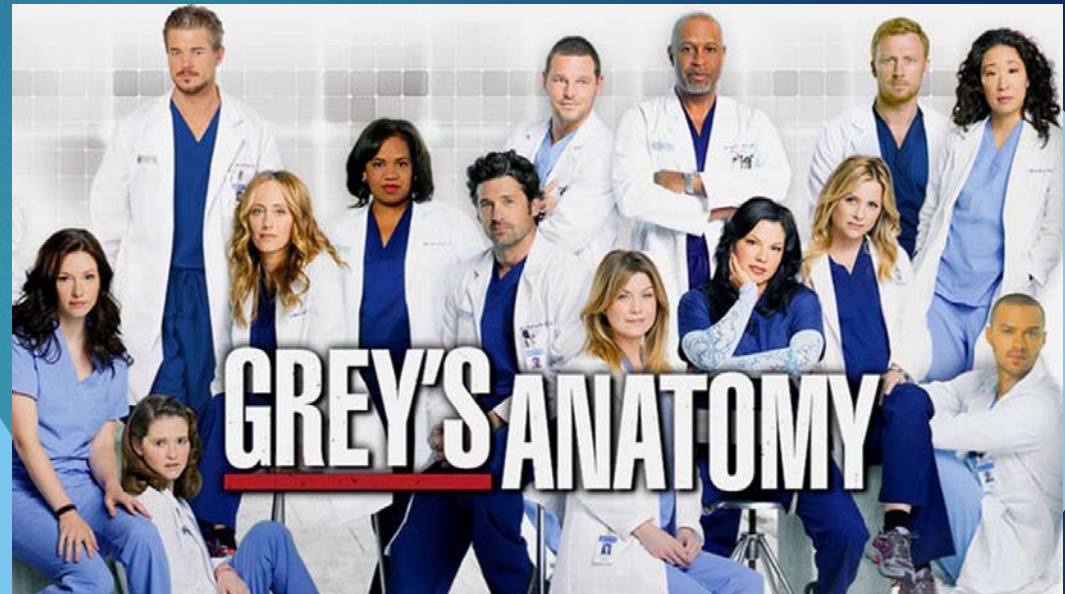
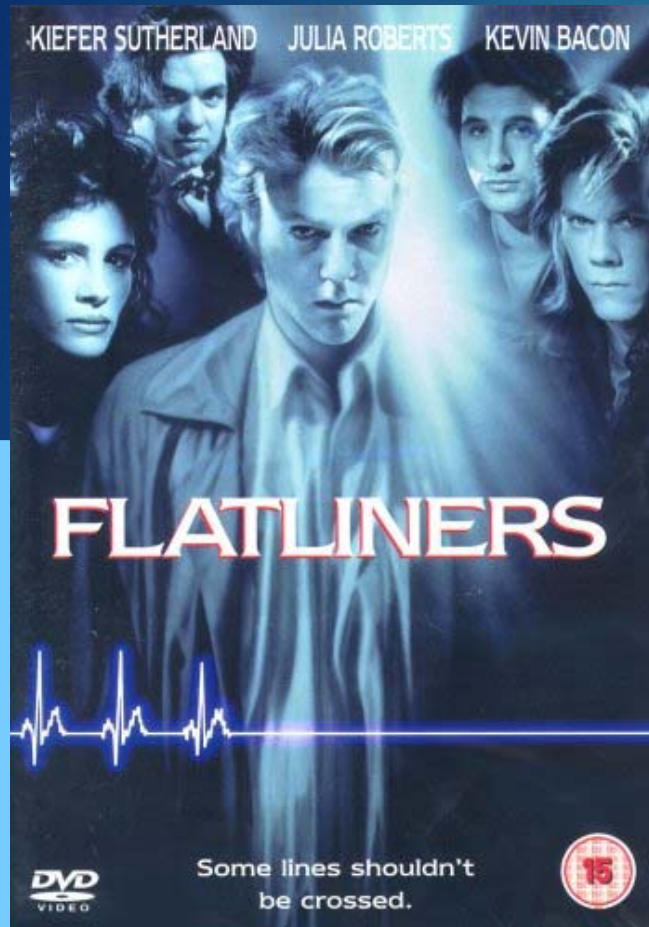
# Gray's Anatomy



Henry Gray F. R. S.  
Drawings by H. V. Carter





























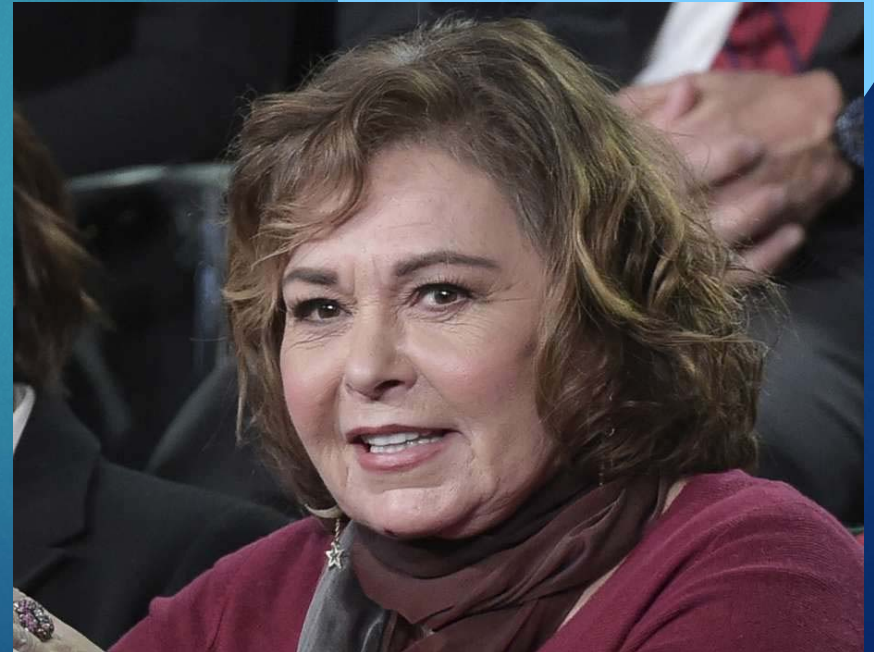












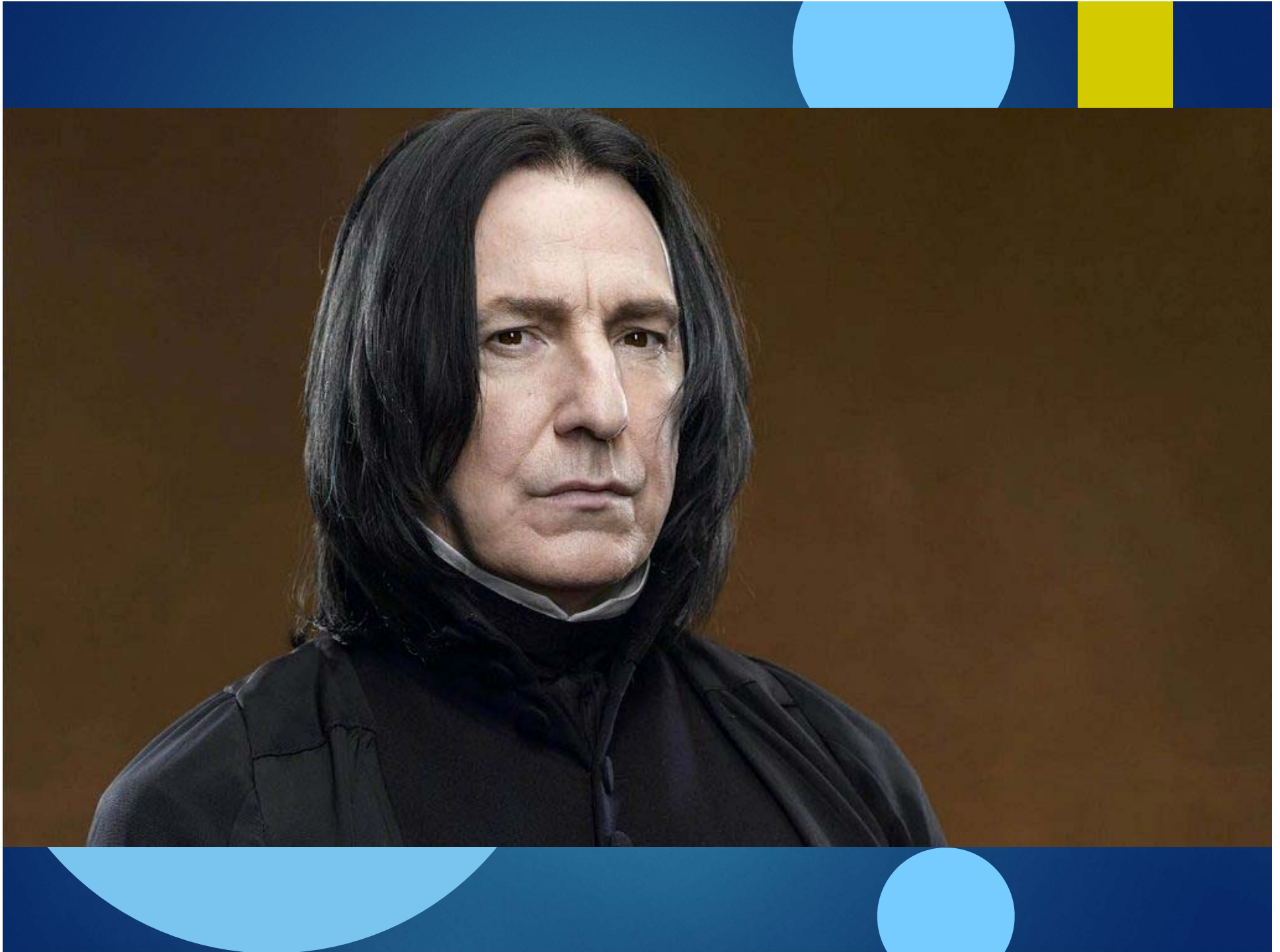












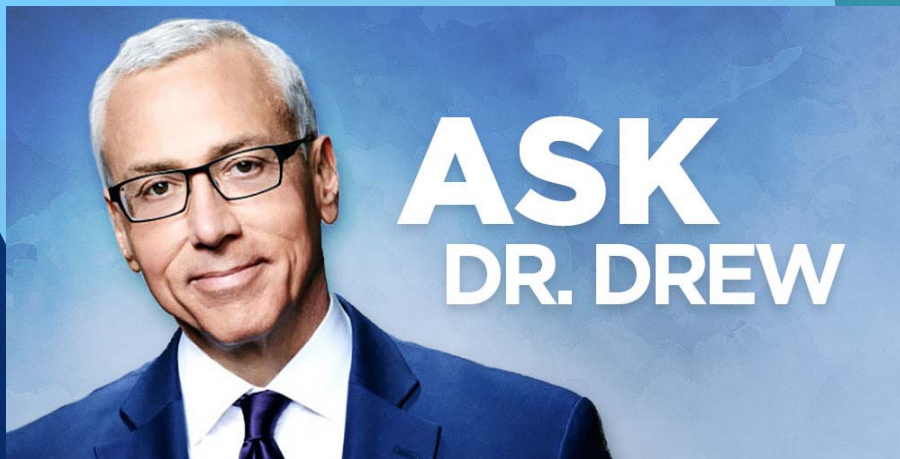
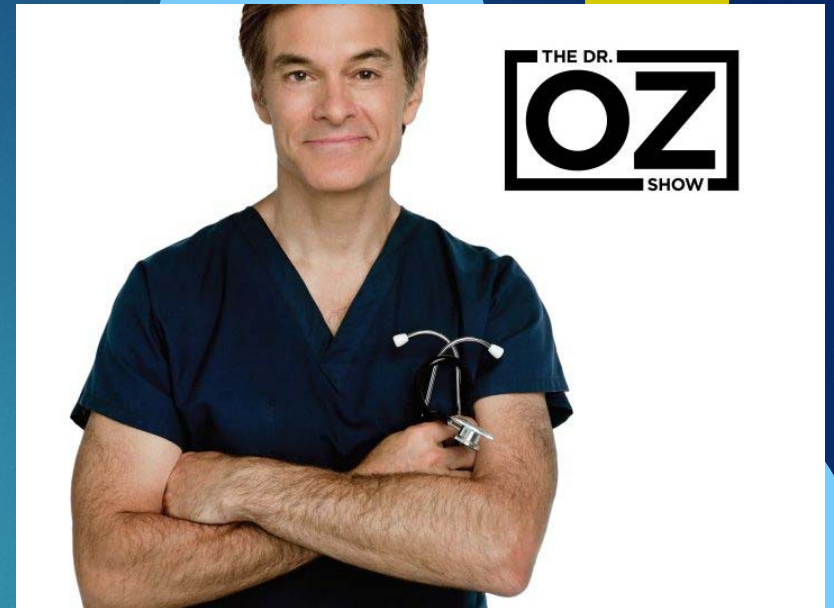
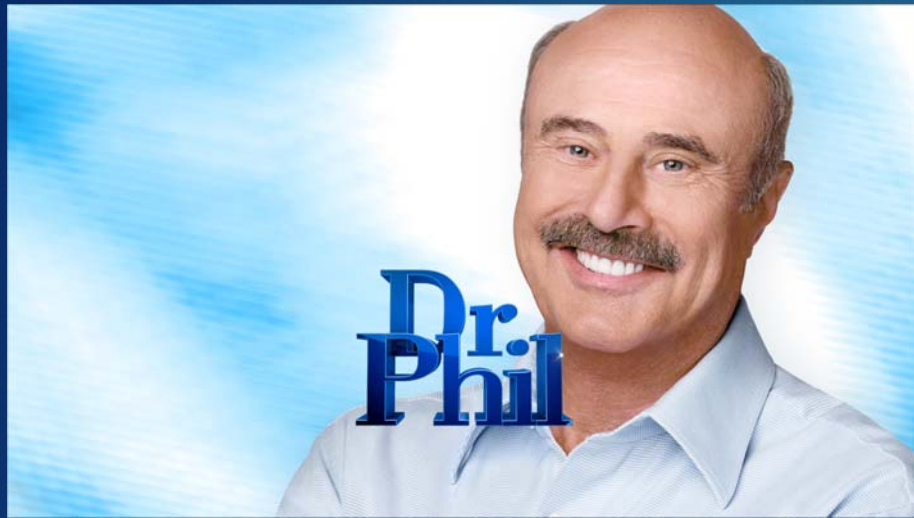






# Internet Forums

- ▶ For Texas schools, the lowest GPA you can have is and still get in is a 2.0. It says so on TMDSAS.
- ▶ Be sure to take a 5<sup>th</sup> year of undergrad science so you can just 'skate through' your first year of medical school
- ▶ Just take classes labeled "health science professions" and you'll be okay on your prereq sciences
- ▶ Organic Chem Grade
- ▶ Calculus is required for all medical schools.
- ▶ If you have a high GPA and a decent MCAT, you'll definitely get in
- ▶ Cannabis vs. Alternative Meds





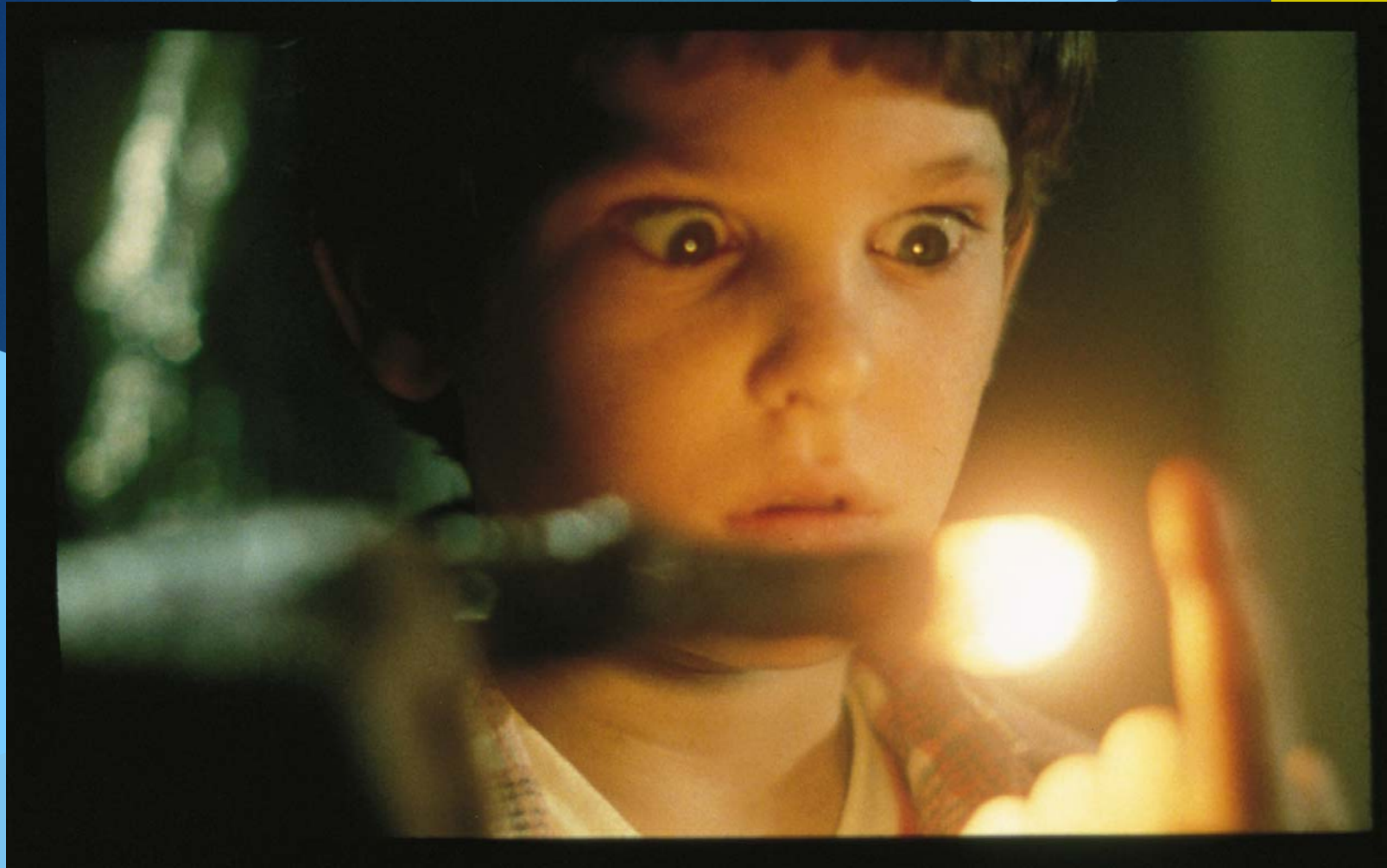
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Common topics of  
misinformation along the  
application path

**ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY**

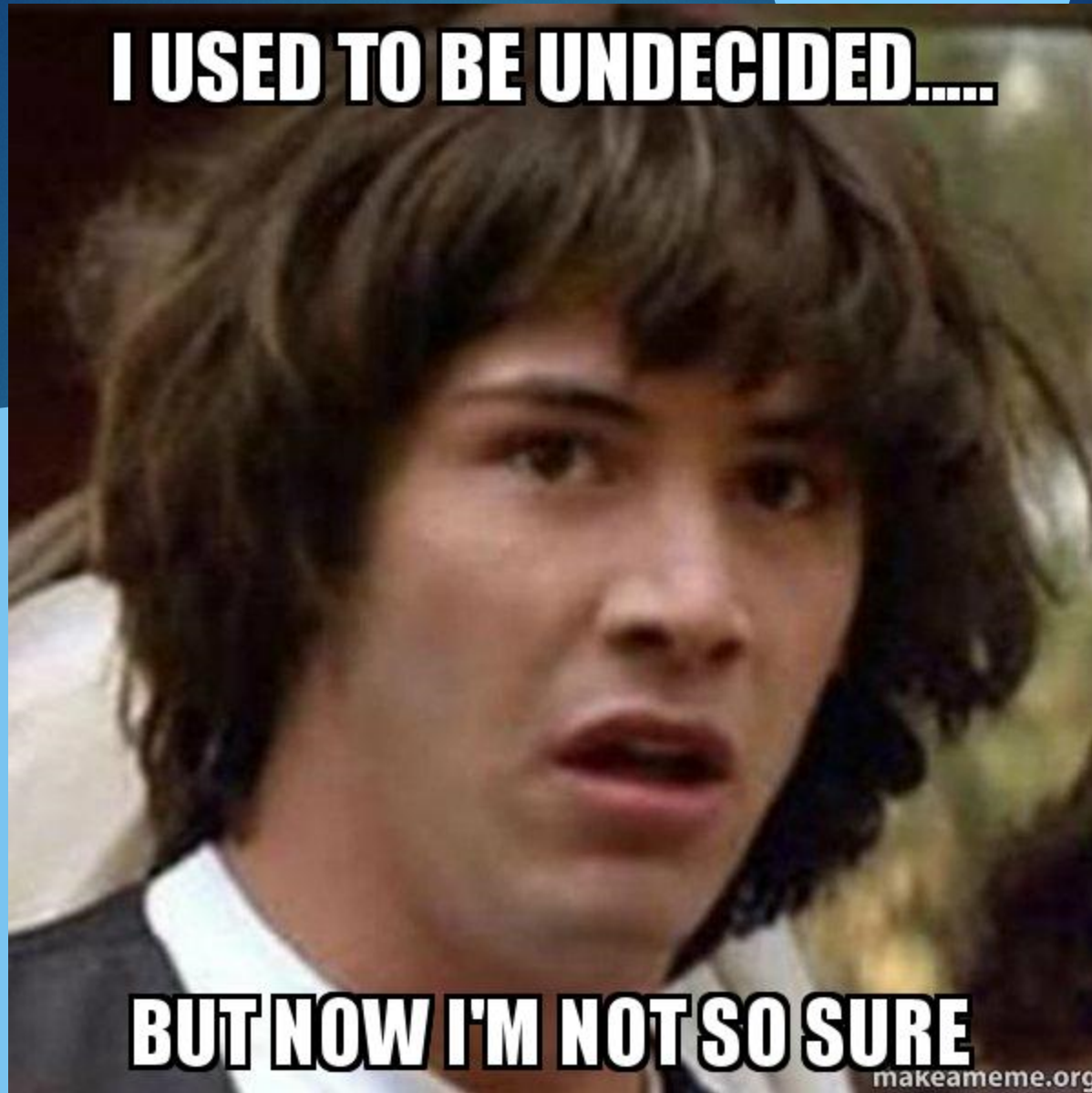
**GET INTO MEDICAL SCHOOL**

imgflip.com





**I USED TO BE UNDECIDED.....**



**BUT NOW I'M NOT SO SURE**

makeameme.org



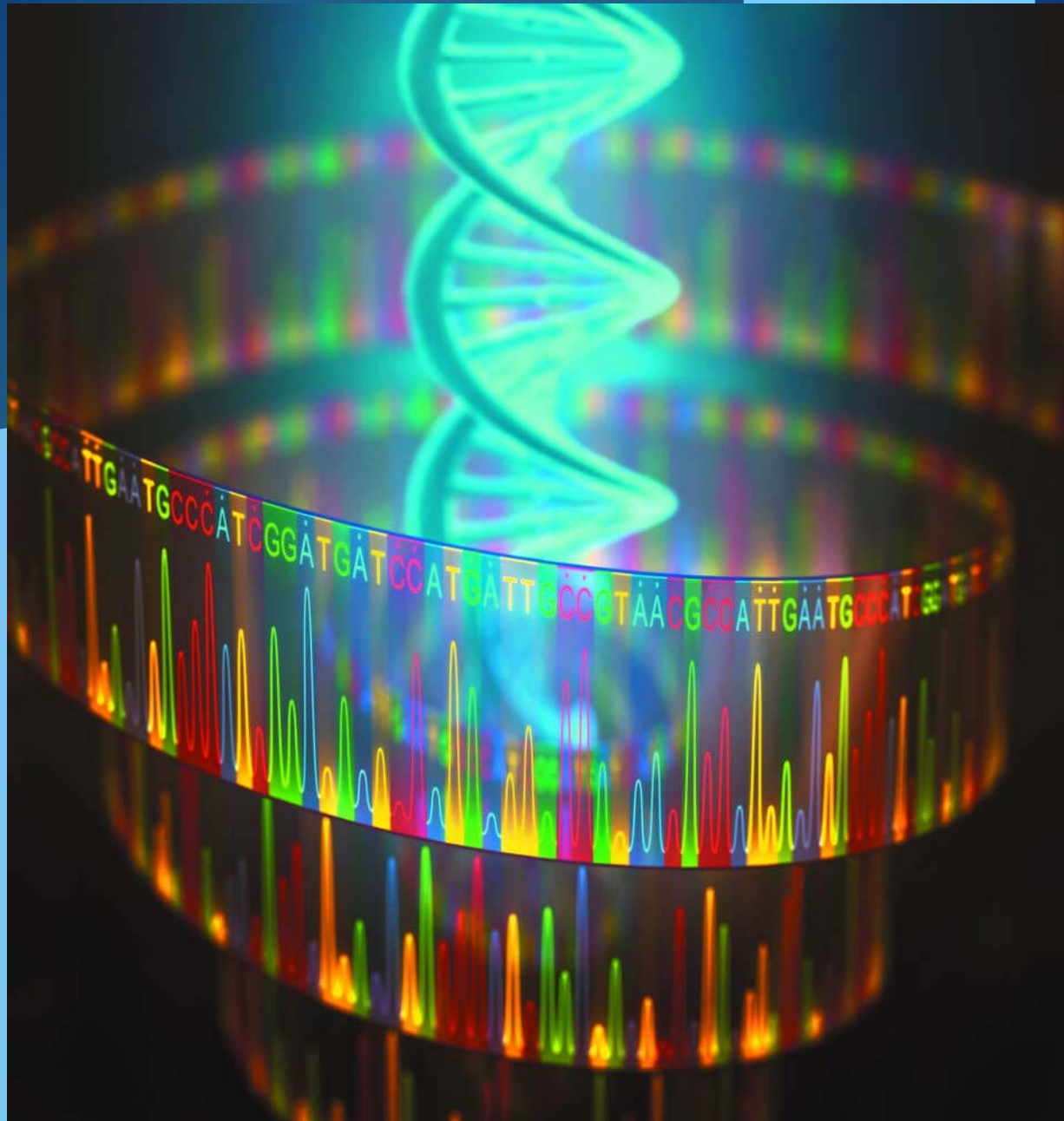
**FOLLOW YOUR**



**DREAMS**

SpongeBob SquarePants vector by a.r. 6

quickmeme.com



**SUBOPTIMAL GRADES**

**MADE IT INTO MEDICAL SCHOOL**

memegenerator.net



**OH YOU DID THE BARE  
MINIMUM?**

**TELL ME MORE ABOUT HOW I SHOULD  
PRAISE YOU**

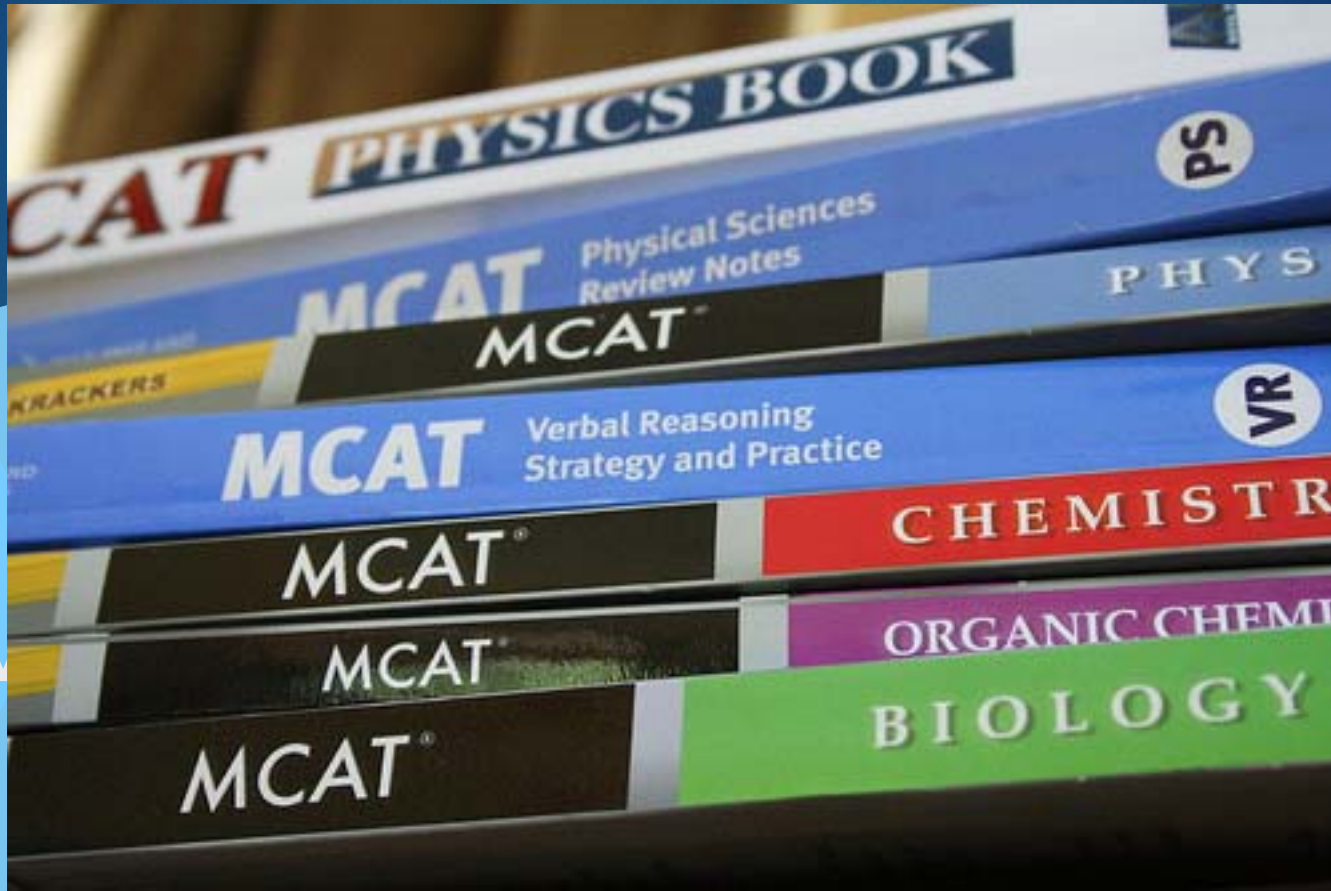
memegenerator.net



The background is a dark blue gradient with several light blue circles of varying sizes. A yellow vertical rectangle is located in the top right corner. The text 'MCAT' is centered in a white box.

# MCAT

Medical College Admission Test











# Common topics where applicants are misinformed

- ▶ What do physician's do?
- ▶ Choosing a Major
- ▶ Courses and Sequence
- ▶ Admissions Requirements
- ▶ Applications process and timeline
- ▶ MCAT/DAT/OAT/PCAT/GRE
- ▶ Dual-Credit and Advanced Placement
- ▶ Personal Statement Writing
- ▶ Becoming a competitive applicant

**You shall not pass**

**because ... criteria**



# Consequences of Misinformation



# Consequences of Misinformation





# Consequences of Misinformation



# Consequences of Misinformation

- ▶ Timeline Disruption
  - ▶ Courses and Degree plans
  - ▶ Application
  - ▶ Graduation
  - ▶ Competitiveness
- ▶ GPA Problems
- ▶ Angry Applicants



















Strategies:  
Be Educated  
Be Creative  
Be Professional



# HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



## CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



## READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



## CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



## SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



## CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



## IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



## CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



## ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.



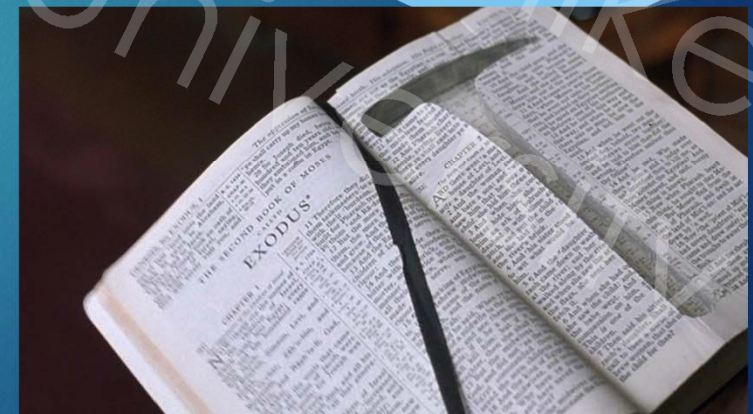
# How to Spot Fake News

- ▶ Consider the source
- ▶ Read beyond
- ▶ Check the author
- ▶ Check supporting documentation
- ▶ Check the date
- ▶ Is it a joke?
- ▶ Check your own biases
- ▶ Ask the experts (multiple)



# Strategies for correcting errors

1. Own the problem
2. Triage the problem
3. Come up with solutions
4. Seek help & advice
5. Correct the issue
6. Follow-up





# Strategies for preventing & correcting errors:

- ▶ Attend professional and applicant seminars
- ▶ Seek advice from the experts (advisors)
- ▶ Verify information with supporting evidence
- ▶ Read, Read, Read

# Life Hacks to combat misinformation

- ▶ Read and follow instructions
- ▶ Take responsibility
- ▶ Verify Information, check sources, ask the experts
- ▶ Seek out and take advantage of new opportunities and experiences
- ▶ Ask for help when you need it
- ▶ Be professional
- ▶ Don't listen to false prophets









**TMD SAS**  
Texas Medical & Dental Schools  
Application Service



MEDICAL DENTAL VETERINARY

CHECK STATUS DEADLINES

ADVISORS CONTACT

Medical

Dental

Veterinary

### About TMD SAS



TMD SAS simplifies the application process for both the applicants and the participating schools. We provide one standardized application, relieving students of the need to complete a separate application for each of the participating schools.

The TMD SAS participating schools benefit by receiving uniform information on all

### Mailing Address

#### For General Mail:

TMD SAS  
P.O. Box 2175  
Austin, TX 78768  
512-499-4785

#### For Packages:

TMD SAS  
210 W. 7th Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

### Participating Schools:

#### MEDICAL:

- UT Southwestern Medical Center
- UT Medical Branch at Galveston
- Long School of Medicine, UT Health San Antonio
- McGovern Medical School
- The University of Texas at Austin, Dell





# Quotable Quotes

- ▶ Much to learn I still have.  
- Yoda, Jedi Master









# Strategies for specific problems

- ▶ Course sequence disruption
- ▶ Lack of preparation
- ▶ Uncompetitive applications
- ▶ Poor GPA







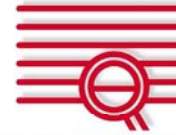


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International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

With thanks to www.FactCheck.org

