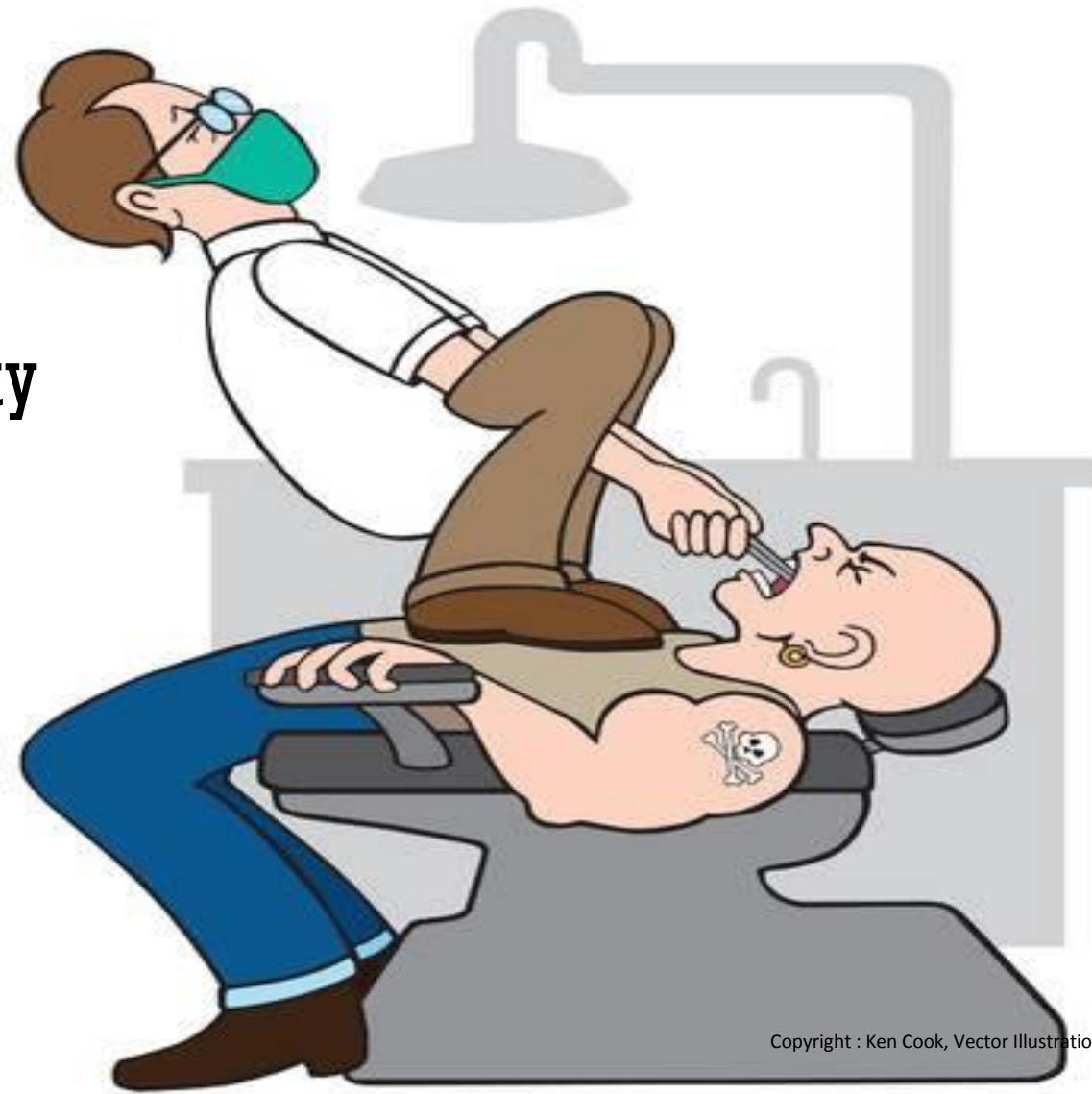
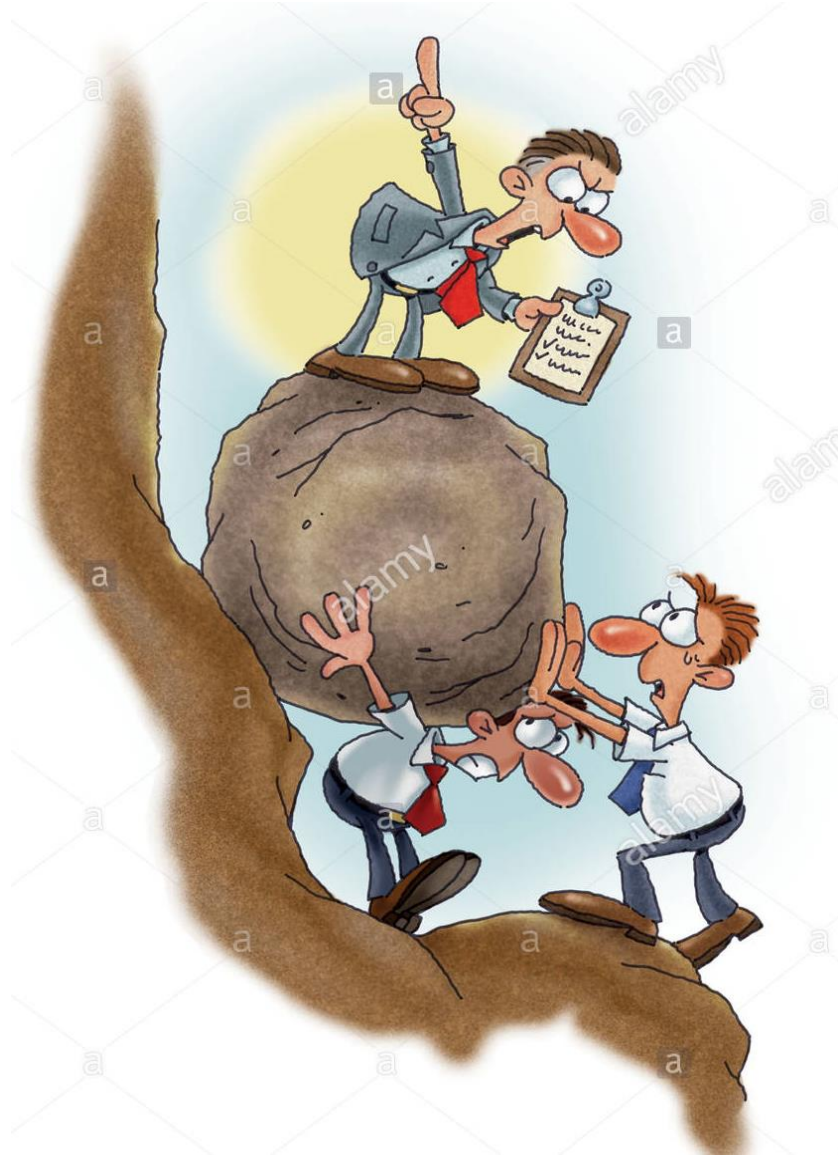


Dr. Larry Sharp  
McMurry University  
TAAHP 2019



Extracting a *good* letter of evaluation from faculty

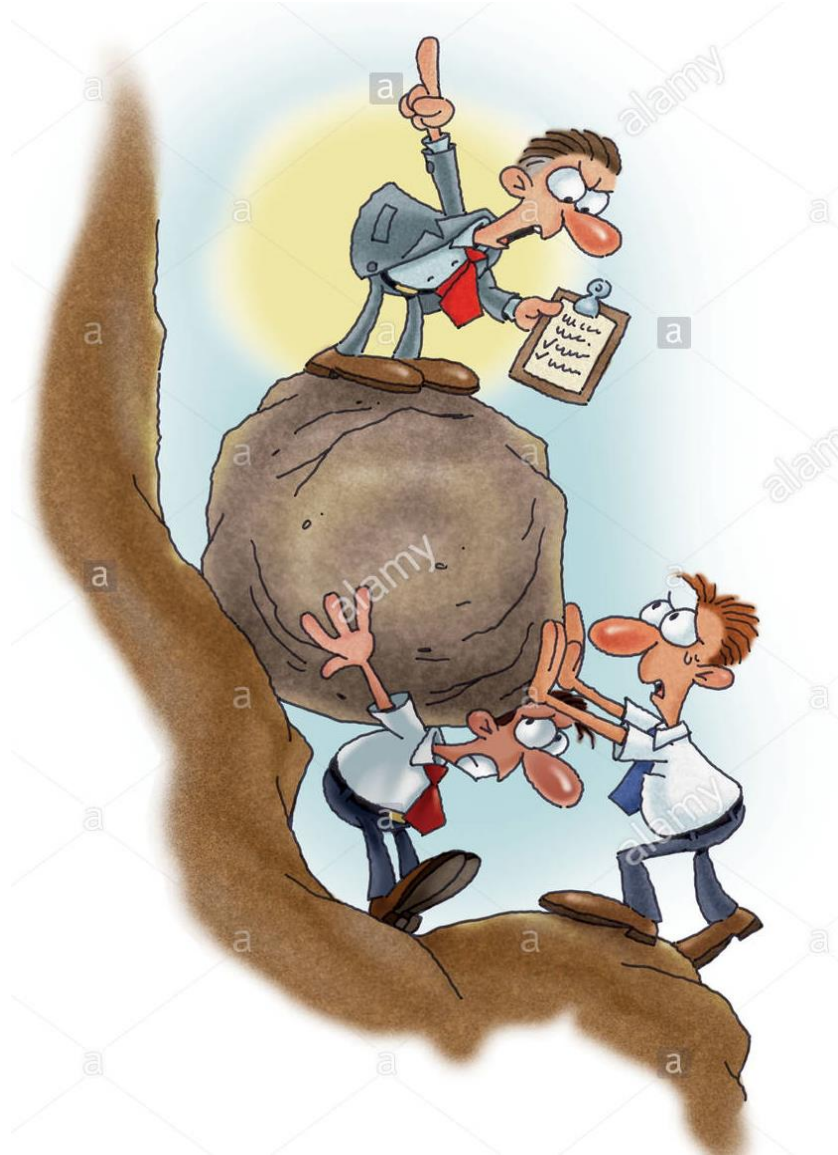
# Extracting a **good letter** of evaluation from faculty



## **Where did I start?**

- I followed previous TAAHP speakers advice who illuminated the critical areas (intangibles) considered important by our Texas Health Professional Schools, and ...
- I downloaded the AAMC website “Guidelines for Letters of Evaluation” section

# Extracting a **good letter** of evaluation from faculty



## **Then what?**

I created a **Composite Letter of Evaluation** that Admission Committee members could depend upon for a true evaluation and assessment of a student's suitability for the intended profession.

**Perfect!**

As the Pre-Health  
Advisor, I understand  
the proper response  
to a request for a  
letter of evaluation  
**but...**

**Or**

**Was it???**



**...faculty did not  
understand its  
relevance or my  
expectations.**

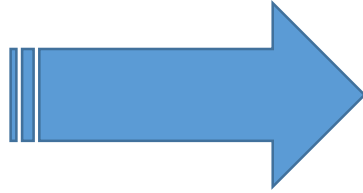


Faculty need to understand everything that you are asking of them, so ...

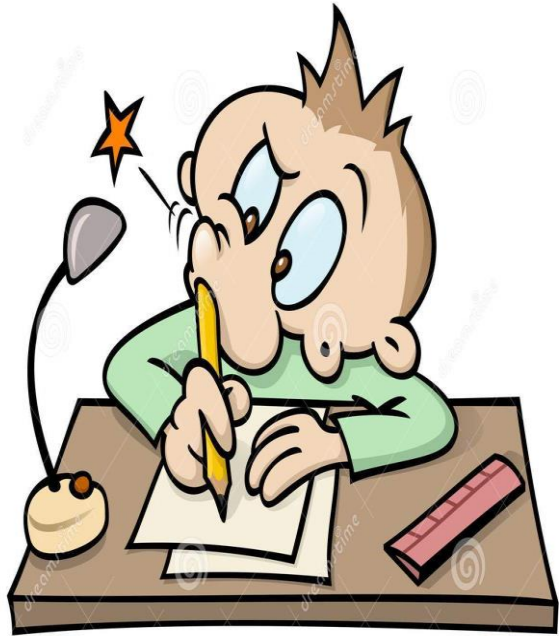
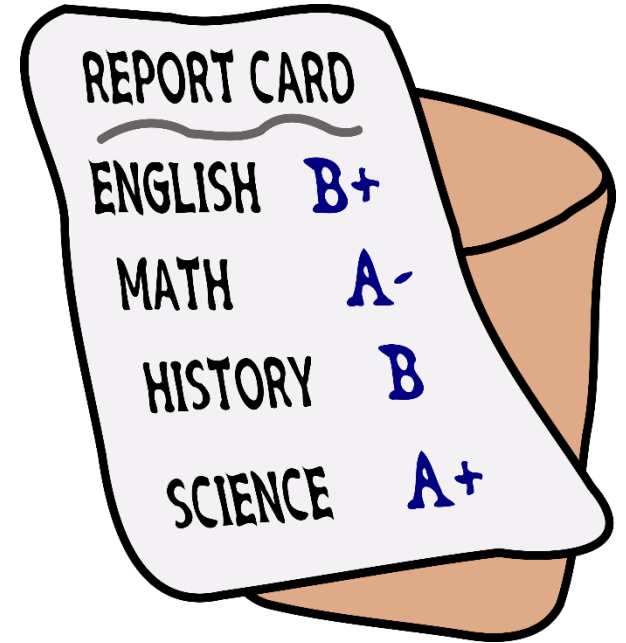
... *help them understand.*



*The following was my presentation to faculty:*

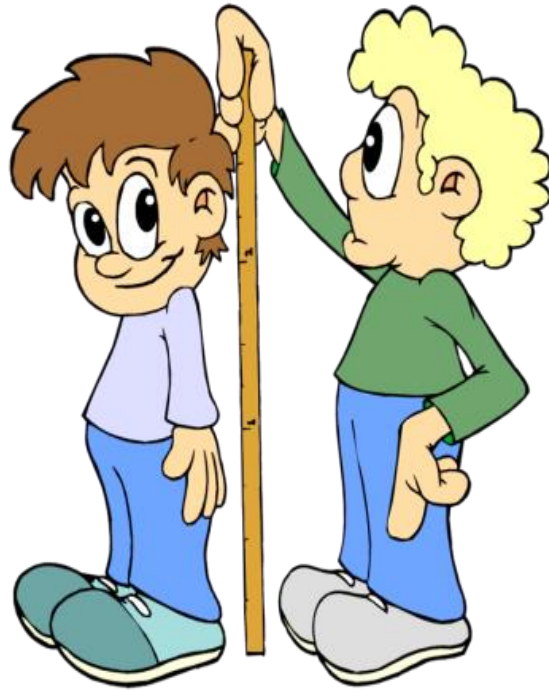


If admittance was just based on grades.....  
I wouldn't need a faculty letter.



If admittance was just based on MCAT scores.....  
I wouldn't need a faculty letter.

It is the *intangibles* that can be manipulated (or NOT) that often determines the success of a future health care professional.



How well does your student measure up?





Admissions officers rated **letters of evaluation** (**NOT** letters of **recommendation**) the third highest data source in determining whom to interview. Most professional schools *require* applicants to submit undergraduate school composite letters that summarize an institution's evaluation of an applicant.

The **composite letters of evaluation** are valued as they provide an integrated and institutional perspective on an applicants' readiness for professional school.



Faculty are often  
**confused** about the  
difference between a  
***letter of recommendation***  
and a ***letter of evaluation***.



Faculty.....many of your students ask for a letter of **recommendation**,  
(i.e. you are playing the role as an **advocate for** the student),

but rarely,



do you have students ask for a letter of **evaluation** that  
provides an accurate assessment of their suitability for  
professional school.



Missing from most institutional composite letters has been the **lack of instruction or guidance** about what information is needed by the admissions officers.



When I solicit letters from you, I am **compiling** this information into a ***composite letter of evaluation*** for the professional school.

Professional schools do **not** expect **any one single evaluation** to provide information about every characteristic of an applicant.



No one letter writer knows everything about an applicant, but multiple letters, combined together, should reveal the applicant's personal competencies and suitability for professional school.



This is the letter  
of evaluation  
form that you  
will receive  
from me....



MCMURRY UNIVERSITY - ABILENE, TEXAS

EVALUATION OF PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPLICANT

Applicant name: John Q. Doe AAMC/TMSAS PIN: 12345

Application to: X Medical School Dental School Other ( )

The student ( X waived retained ) rights to see the application letter.

1. What is the basis of your interaction with this student? (check all that apply)

Instructor in one or more Academic advisor Supervision of Other interactions  
lecture or lab classes undergraduate research (described in "Remarks")  
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

2. Please rate this in comparison with other students who are applying (or have applied in the past) to similar professional schools for each of the qualities listed below by marking in the appropriate box. If you have not had significant interaction with this student, please indicate and return this form to the Pre-Health Professions Advisor.

RANKINGS: E Excellent Professional School Applicant (Highest 10% of applicants)  
G Good Professional School Applicant (Upper 25% of applicants)  
A Average Professional School Applicant (Middle 38% of applicants)  
B Below average as Professional School Applicant (Lower 17%)  
Q Questionable as Professional School Applicant  
U Unsatisfactory  
II Insufficient information for forming judgment

Trait	E	G	A	B	Q	U	II
Scholarship / Problem Solving Skills							
Ability to make connections between knowledge and field application							
Judgment / maturity (self-discipline)							
Initiative							
Industry / drive (motivation)							
Leadership							
Cooperation							
Reliability							
Personal attributes (communication skills, interpersonal skills, and social skills)							
Overall promise in the health professions							

3. Given proper medical/dental training, would this student be acceptable to you as a health care provider?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

4. How strongly do you support this student's application (check one)

Very strongly support Strongly support Support Ambivalent Cannot support  
(Highest 10%) (Upper 25%) (Middle 38%) (Lower 17%)  
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

5. Narrative Remarks/Comments: (please reference the above traits in your narrative remark / comment)

This is the first or informational section of the composite letter form:



Please  
answer



MCMURRY UNIVERSITY - ABILENE, TEXAS  
EVALUATION OF PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPLICANT

Applicant name: **John Q. Doe** AAMC/TMDSAS PIN: 12345

Application to:  X  Medical School    \_\_\_ Dental School    \_\_\_ Other ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

The student (  X  waived    \_\_\_ retained ) rights to see the application letter.

1. What is the basis of your interaction with this student? *(check all that apply)*
- |  |                          |                                       |   |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Instructor in one or more lecture or lab classes | Academic advisor         | Supervision of undergraduate research | Other interactions (described in "Remarks") |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>                    |

## This is the second or comparison section of the composite letter form:

2. Please rate this *in comparison with other students who are applying (or have applied in the past) to similar professional schools* for each of the qualities listed below by marking in the appropriate box. ***If you have not had significant interaction with this student, please indicate and return this form to the Pre-Health Professions Advisor.***

RANKINGS:      E      Excellent Professional School Applicant (*Highest 10% of applicants*)  
                      G      Good Professional School Applicant (*Upper 25% of applicants*)  
                      A      Average Professional School Applicant (*Middle 38% of applicants*)  
                      B      Below average as Professional School Applicant (*Lower 17%*)  
                      Q      Questionable as Professional School Applicant  
                      U      Unsatisfactory  
                      II     Insufficient information for forming judgment

<i><b>Trait</b></i>	<b>E</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>II</b>
<i><b>Scholarship / Problem Solving Skills</b></i>							
<i><b>Ability to make connections between knowledge and field application</b></i>							
<i><b>Judgment / maturity (self-discipline)</b></i>							
<i><b>Initiative</b></i>							
<i><b>Industry / drive (motivation)</b></i>							
<i><b>Leadership</b></i>							
<i><b>Cooperation</b></i>							
<i><b>Reliability</b></i>							
<i><b>Personal attributes (communication skills, interpersonal skills, and social skills)</b></i>							
<i><b>Overall promise in the health professions</b></i>							



Please  
answer

This is the third and fourth or judgement section of the composite letter form:

Please  
answer

3. Given proper medical/dental training, would this student be acceptable to you as a health care provider?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. How strongly do you support this student's application (*check one*)

Very strongly support  
(Highest 10%)

☐

Strongly support  
(Upper 25%)

☐

Support  
(Middle 38%)

☐

Ambivalent  
(Lower 17%)

☐

Cannot support

☐

The last section is the narrative of the composite letter form:

Please  
provide

5. Narrative Remarks/Comments: (please reference the **above traits** in your narrative remark / comment)

**Using your table rankings\***, I ask that you provide **narrative** comments on the applicant's strengths and weaknesses.

I offer the following guidelines to help assist you in writing your student evaluation narrative...







## **GUIDELINES**

- **Quality is more important rather than letter length.** Focus on the applicant rather than details about the lab, course, or the assignment. **Good or bad!**



Remember that this is a **combined** evaluation of the applicant, **and if a student has flaws, those are valid points to include.**



## **GUIDELINES**

- **Do NOT include information on grades.** They are available within the application. Include scores ONLY IF you are providing context to help interpret them.
- **Focus on behaviors** that you have observed directly when describing applicant's suitability for professional school. Once again, **Good or bad!**



Passive



Assertive



Aggressive

- **Comparisons are appreciated** and helpful. If you make comparisons, include information about the comparison group, students in a class, co-workers, etc.

To help you get started, I am providing the following prompts (please feel free to use any and/or all of them in your **narrative**; remember the admissions committees want to make an informed decision, so they want to see *the good, the bad, and the ugly*):

### **NARRATIVE:**

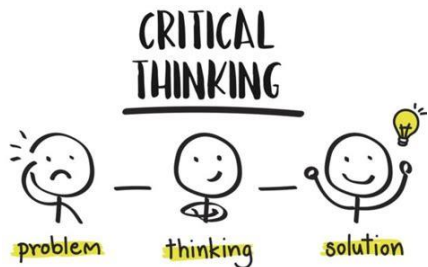
- ***Thinking & Reasoning Competencies***
- ***Science Competencies***
- ***Interpersonal Competencies***
- ***Intrapersonal Competencies***

## **NARRATIVE:**

*Describe how the applicant has, or has NOT demonstrated **any** of the following competencies that are necessary for success in professional school.*

### ● **Thinking & Reasoning Competencies**

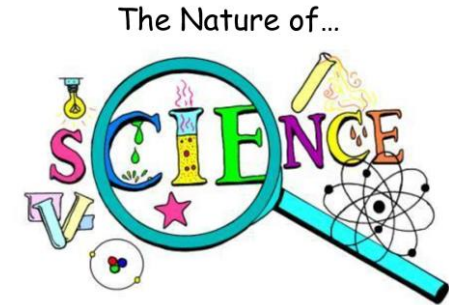
- **Critical Thinking:** Uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems
- **Quantitative Reasoning:** Applies quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world
- **Scientific Inquiry:** Applies knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems, and formulate research questions and hypotheses
- **Written Communication:** Effectively conveying information to others using written words and sentences
- **Ability to ask questions that extend knowledge or application**



**NARRATIVE:**

*Describe how the applicant has, or has NOT demonstrated **any** of the following competencies that are necessary for success in professional school.*

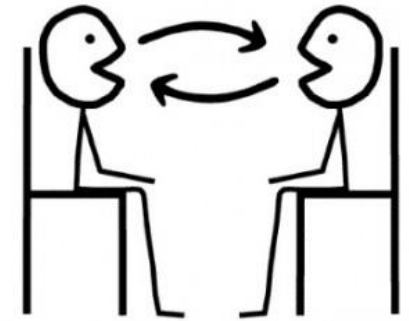
- *Thinking & Reasoning Competencies*
- ***Science Competencies***
  - ***Living Systems***: Applies knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems
  - ***Human Behavior***: Applies knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to psychological, social, and biological factors that influence health and well-being





## **NARRATIVE:**

Describe how the applicant has, or has NOT demonstrated **any** of the following competencies that are necessary for success in professional school.



- *Thinking & Reasoning Competencies*
- *Science Competencies*
- ***Interpersonal Competencies***
  - ***Service Orientation:*** Demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society, locally nationally, and globally
  - ***Social Skills:*** Demonstrates awareness of others' needs, goals, and feelings, and adjusts behaviors in response to these clues; and treats others with respect
  - ***Cultural Competence:*** Demonstrates knowledge of social and cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds
  - ***Teamwork:*** Works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information & knowledge with others; puts team goals ahead of individual goals
  - ***Oral Communication:*** Effectively conveys information to others using spoken words and sentences; listens effectively; adjusts approach and or clarifies information as needed

## **NARRATIVE:**

*Describe how the applicant has, or has NOT demonstrated **any** of the following competencies that are necessary for success in professional school.*

- *Thinking & Reasoning Competencies*
- *Science Competencies*
- *Interpersonal Competencies*
- ***Intrapersonal Competencies***
  - ***Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others:*** Behaves in an honest and ethical manner; develops academic and personal integrity; follows rules and procedures; resists peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior
  - ***Reliability and Dependability:*** Consistently fulfills obligations in a timely manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance
  - ***Resilience and Adaptability:*** Demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; recovers from setbacks
  - ***Capacity for Improvement:*** Sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; solicits and responds appropriately to feedback



After I receive everyone's individual letters of evaluation, I combine them into a composite form...



MCMURRY UNIVERSITY - ABILENE, TEXAS  
EVALUATION OF PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPLICANT

Applicant name: **John Q. Doe** TMD SAS PIN: 12345

Application to: ☒ Medical School ☐ Dental School ☐ Other (\_\_\_\_\_)

The student ☒ waived ☐ retained rights to see the application letter.

1. What is the basis of your interaction with this student? (check all that apply)

Instructor in one or more lecture or lab classes	Academic advisor	Supervision of undergraduate research	Other interactions (described in "Remarks")
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1

2. Please rate this *in comparison with other students who are applying (or have applied in the past) to similar professional schools* for each of the qualities listed below by marking in the appropriate box. **If you have not had significant interaction with this student, please indicate and return this form to the Pre-Health Professions Advisor.**

RANKINGS:

E	Excellent Professional School Applicant ( <i>Upper 10% of applicants</i> )
G	Good Professional School Applicant ( <i>Upper 25% of applicants</i> )
A	Average Professional School Applicant
B	Below average as Professional School Applicant
Q	Questionable as Professional School Applicant
U	Unsatisfactory
II	Insufficient information for forming judgment

Trait (quality pts on 5 pt. scale)	E = 5	G = 4	A = 3	B = 2	Q = 1	U = 0	II	Comments
------------------------------------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	----	----------

Faculty...your rankings are combined and applied to a 5 pt. scale that is shown on the composite form...

- RANKINGS:
- E

G

A

B

Q

U

II
- Excellent Professional School Applicant (*Upper 10% of applicants*)

Good Professional School Applicant (*Upper 25% of applicants*)

Average Professional School Applicant

Below average as Professional School Applicant

Questionable as Professional School Applicant

Unsatisfactory

Insufficient information for forming judgment

Trait (quality pts on 5 pt. scale)	E = 5	G = 4	A = 3	B = 2	Q = 1	U = 0	II	Comments
Scholarship (4.6)	3	2					1	Six (6) former faculty responded to the call for evaluation of this student. Departments represented were Mathematics, and Chemistry & Biochemistry
Native ability (4.5)	2	2					2	
Judgment/maturity (4.17)	3	1	2					
Initiative (4.5)	3	3						
Industry/drive (4.33)	4	1		1				
Leadership (4.4)	2	3					1	
Cooperation (4.5)	3	3						
Reliability (4.5)	4	1	1					
Personal attributes (4.6)	3	2					1	
Overall promise in the health professions (4.17)	2	3	1					

3. Given proper medical/dental training, would this student be acceptable to you as a health care provider?

6 Yes

0 No

4. How strongly do you support this candidate's application (check one)

Very strongly support

Strongly support

Support

Ambivalent

Cannot support

3

2

1

☐

☐

5. REMARKS

Five of the six faculty responding provided the comments found below.

# MCMURY UNIVERSITY - ABILENE, TEXAS

## EVALUATION OF PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPLICANT

Applicant name:

**John Q. Doe**

TMSAS PIN: 12345

Application to: ☒ **Medical School** ☐ Dental School ☐ Other ( )

The student ☒ **waived** ☐ retained rights to see the application letter.

1. What is the basis of your interaction with this student? (check all that apply)

**Instructor in one or more lecture or lab classes**

Academic advisor

Supervision of undergraduate research

**Other interactions (described in "Remarks")**

6

☐

☐

1

2. Please rate this in comparison with other students who are applying (or have applied in the past) to similar professional schools for each of the qualities listed below by marking in the appropriate box. If you have not had significant interaction with this student, please indicate and return this form to the Pre-Health Professions Advisor.

RANKINGS: E Excellent Professional School Applicant (Upper 10% of applicants)  
G Good Professional School Applicant (Upper 25% of applicants)  
A Average Professional School Applicant  
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Q Questionable as Professional School Applicant  
U Unsatisfactory  
I Insufficient information for forming judgment

Trait (quality pts on 5 pt. scale)	E = 5	G = 4	A = 3	B = 2	Q = 1	U = 0	I	Comments
Scholarship (4.6)	3	2					1	
Native ability (4.5)	2	2					2	
Judgment/maturity (4.17)	3	1	2					
Initiative (4.5)	3	3						
Industry/drive (4.33)	4	1		1				
Leadership (4.4)	2	3					1	
Cooperation (4.5)	3	3						
Reliability (4.5)	4	1	1					
Personal attributes (4.6)	3	2					1	
Overall promise in the health professions (4.17)	2	3	1					

3. Given proper medical/dental training, would this student be acceptable to you as a health care provider?

6 Yes  
0 No

4. How strongly do you support this candidate's application (check one)

**Very strongly support**  
3

**Strongly support**  
2

**Support**  
1

**Ambivalent**  
☐

**Cannot support**  
☐

5. REMARKS Five of the six faculty responding provided the comments found below.

is an excellent student and I  
iversity. I have known Mr.  
ochemistry courses. I fully  
- and A+ in physical chemistry  
gh. He is not satisfied at just  
at looking for exceptions to  
John has been a member of  
ticularly in arranging  
e club. I am aware of no  
ed student in your program.

cademic initiative. John  
he puts in the effort to not only  
for help on a question or  
which is common in the  
r class members and the  
task. This prevents him from  
with stories that are off topic  
the fact that he has worked  
ith those students. Overall, I

ative Analysis (lecture plus  
rho was careful and precise in  
strain of thought. He asked  
Quantitative Analysis lab, he  
at determination and a solid  
h a lab, and did very well in  
g all his other semesters at  
excellent time management  
ith a variety of people. This  
I believe that John can and

hn was a very dedicated  
ded diligently. He was one of

semester Organic Chemistry,  
high grades (Organic: A-, A-;  
e worked enough problems  
the chemistry department. He  
current officer of the club.  
e structure necessary to  
ything! He has taken very  
king organic chemistry). He  
e in the literature seminar  
od dentist and I would allow

is an excellent student and I  
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- and A+ in physical chemistry  
gh. He is not satisfied at just  
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g all his other semesters at  
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I believe that John can and

hn was a very dedicated  
ded diligently. He was one of

semester Organic Chemistry,  
high grades (Organic: A-, A-;  
e worked enough problems  
the chemistry department. He  
current officer of the club.  
e structure necessary to  
ything! He has taken very  
king organic chemistry). He  
e in the literature seminar  
od dentist and I would allow







Without *your* participation, this composite letter would not be possible!

# THANK YOU!