

### **Career Advisors Panel Discussion 6/5/24**

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*Note: below are summaries of Career Advisors' responses; not word for word*

#### **How is your role and/or perspective different as a Career Advisor, vs. a Specialty Advisor or other faculty in a specific specialty?**

**BS:** We are experts at the process. We bring knowledge to bear on the entire process of applying to residency. The other way we can be of help to you is with things like mock interviews and going through the interview process.

**BC:** We help with the overview of the process – Noteworthy Characteristics, mock interviews, program list, etc. – but if you are going into a niche specialty and want to know which programs to apply to, that's where you want to specialty advisor to help you. The specialty level info really tailors your application to that specialty. We help with the overview and getting you through the whole process.

**VB:** We are here as much as you need us. We are going to check in with you and cover all the major bases like Noteworthy Characteristics and personal statements and mock interviews. And if you want to just check all those boxes that's fine, but it would be a shame to not use us more. We want to be involved in your process and help you with all the intricacies of this process. You can't wear us out, so take advantage of the breadth of knowledge we can provide.

**JW:** They are being very humble about what they have to offer. We have a two-sided advising system with Career Advisors and Specialty Advisors. If you don't develop relationships with both advisors, it can lead to breakdowns in your application. If you think you can get through this whole process just leaning on your Specialty Advisor, it can lead to things like your PS not being adequately expressive of what it should or your program list may not be long enough or diverse enough. Your Specialty Advisor may overestimate your application strength or only see the process through their narrow lense. The Specialty Advisor will be very helpful, but it's important to cross check their advice with your Career Advisor to get a complete picture. It's crucial to use both advisors.

#### **In your experience, what are some of the big reasons students may struggle during the residency application process or even fail to match?**

**BS:** The main things I have seen either not applying to a sufficient number of programs or not an appropriate breadth of programs. The data for this is available through the NRMP system. When I have seen people struggle in the past it's been because they didn't apply to enough programs or they applied

to only very competitive programs. So it's really important to work with your Career Advisor to ensure your list is long enough and diverse enough.

**VB:** Taking a big step back, I would first say: Specialty choice. I have had students that realized a little too late they were applying in the wrong specialty. If you are still struggling with your decision or you are unsure, talk to your advisor soon so we can work through it together rather than having to backtrack later. The other thing would be the interview. Not preparing well enough can make or break your interview. So we can help you – we will mock interview you until the cows come home. When the camera comes on and you are nervous, you want to be prepared.

**BC:** You also want to be comfortable talking about yourself and where you want to go in your career during the interview. It's important to be able to tell your story and really articulate your narrative verbally (not just in your PS). Think about how you are telling the story about yourself. That is where students can stumble; not being able to tell the story about themselves and why they have chosen the path they are on.

Also remember this is a marathon, not a sprint, and you need to pace yourselves rather than being racing around trying to finish everything at the last minute. Another place students can stumble is when they sort of ghost us for a while and then pop back up to ask for help with a personal statement or something on their application or a mock interview and then it's harder for us to help you and you don't have that story about yourself well developed. So try to meet the milestones as you go, based on the advising team's guidance.

**BB:** Agree with that – don't ghost us. If you aren't getting the right number of interview or things are moving to slow, reach out to us sooner rather than later. Because we can make calls and advocate for you if needed. We do have perspective on the kind of numbers you need to see and what progress you should be making, but we can't help if you don't reach out proactively.

**Dr. Woodruff:** I would reiterate the point about program diversification. There is no reason not to have an appropriately diverse program list. And when your Career Advisor tells you that your list is not diverse enough, don't take offense to that! They are trying to help you, and they have experience.

Another thing we've seen is struggling in the interview, so when your Career Advisor is telling you about a quirk you may not have realized from your mock interview, take that seriously. The other thing is not getting enough interviews. In the Program Signal era, students across the board are getting lower numbers of interviews, so its important that you apply to an appropriate number of programs and make the most of each interview you get – it's very important to be prepared for every interview.

**BC:** One of our roles is also to be honest with you! We're not going to tell you not to apply to certain programs, but we will tell you if you need to diversify more.

**Audience Q: How do you figure out the competitiveness of a program?**

**BS:** There are resources your Career Advisor can put you in touch with. That's also something your Specialty Advisor can help you with, and there's a Pritzker database of historical Match outcomes we can walk through with you.