



## Welcome to the Spring 2020 MSMP Newsletter!

Aloha mentees,

We hope you and your loved ones are staying healthy and safe during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic situation. During these challenging times like this, it is more important than ever to take care of your physical and mental health, support each other, and maintain a positive attitude. Please don't hesitate to contact us and/or your mentor if you want to talk about anything. As we adjust to the "new normal" lifestyle, try to make the best of the situation. I know it must be difficult being a pre-med student during this time, but just know that we are here for you, and you will do great!



Thank you to those who attended our 1st ever virtual event earlier this month! We hope you enjoyed our presentation covering the basics of the AMCAS application and providing mock interview practice. We even had a guest appearance from Dr. Ivy Asano, our faculty advisor and Director of Admissions! Thank you, Dr. Asano for your time and wonderful words of wisdom! We had a great turnout and are excited to host another virtual event in June. Please vote on the poll that we sent out and keep an eye out for emails once we confirm the logistics.

Keep up the hard work & congrats on completing the semester! The journey to medical school is a marathon. You got this!

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- Virtual Workshop in June. Topic is TBD (poll sent out via email)



# Spring MSMP Events & COVID-19 Update

## Anatomy Lab Tour (2/22/20)

We hosted a tour of the JABSOM Anatomy Lab and provided mentees the amazing opportunity to meet our silent teachers and experience first-hand anatomy on cadavers at various stations led by 1st year medical students. We hope to instill a greater appreciation for the human body and our Willed Body Program. As one of our most popular, fun, and interactive events, we hope to continue to offer this opportunity in the future. We would like to send a big thank you to Dr. Steven Labrash, Dr. Scott Lozonoff, and the rest of the Anatomy Lab members for allowing us to open up access to the lab for our mentees!

## Virtual AMCAS Application and Mock Interview Workshop (5/2/20)

We hosted our first ever virtual workshop via Zoom. We had a great turnout for our presentation on applying to medical school. After the presentation, we also hosted mock interviews to those mentees who were interested! We hope it was helpful going over the basics of applying to medical school and practicing your interview skills. Thank you to our fellow 1st year medical students who volunteered their time to assist with the mock interviews and were able to give feedback! And thank you to Dr. Asano for joining us and providing great advice!

## Upcoming Spring Events

- Community Service Event- Walk With a Future Doc: Cancelled
- **2nd Virtual Workshop Event (June):** Please vote on the topics you are interested in and check your emails for updates once we confirm the workshop logistics.

## JABSOM COVID-19 Updates

As this has been a constantly evolving situation, we would recommend checking the JABSOM admissions website for the most up-to-date information regarding admissions, deadlines, and requirements for JABSOM:

<https://admissions.jabsom.hawaii.edu/admissions-updates/>



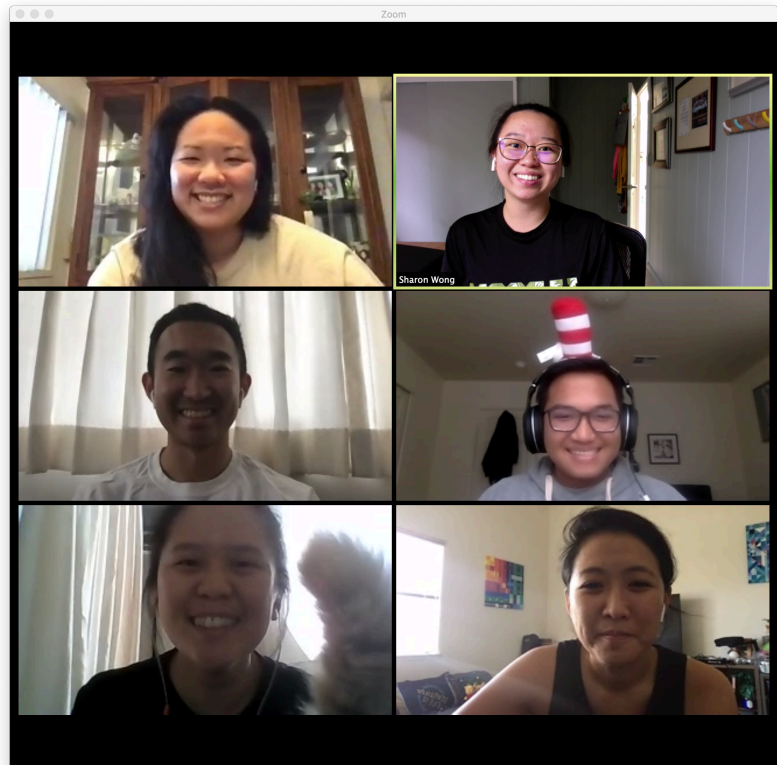
Please keep in mind that each medical school is different and may have different policies regarding admissions, deadlines, and requirements. Be sure to check each school's website, the AAMC, and AMCAS for the most current updates during these times.

## Message from the MSMP Board

About 1 year ago, the members of the JABSOM class of 2023 were starting to officially come together. Before receiving our JABSOM admission acceptance decision, some of us had been working and/or volunteering during the gap year(s), some were soon-to-be college graduates, and some were completing the 'Imi Ho'ola program. The journey to medical school is time-consuming, challenging, and doesn't always go according to our plans. No matter where you are in your journey to medical school, keep persevering and seek advice when needed. There is no one "best" path for getting into medical school.

As we near the end of our 1st year of medical school at JABSOM, my fellow 1st year classmates and I reflected on our journeys to medical school, since it is still relatively fresh in our minds. We hope our stories and advice will help provide support and inspiration wherever you are in your medical school journey.

Or if nothing else, I hope this can be something nice to read during quarantine and maybe get to know us a little better. And yes, Josh is wearing an awesome hat. And yes, Eileen has a cat.



**Disclaimer:** The following responses and views are not officially affiliated with JABSOM Office of Admissions. We are just sharing our thoughts on different aspects of applying to medical school.

**Q: When did you decide you wanted to pursue a career in medicine? What inspired you to become a physician?**

"I was lucky enough to participate in the medical problem solving summer program here at JABSOM right before my senior year of high school. Kaiser High School was the only public HS at the time, so I was very grateful for the opportunity. I got to experience what life was like as a medical student and get introduced to the field of medicine. I had such a blast. Every day I came in excited for more. Three weeks later after we had finished the program, I knew from that point on that I could totally see myself doing this for the rest of my life. Also, Dr. Sakai was my PBL tutor, and if you know him, you can imagine why I was completely sold! From that point on, I studied hard and took the steps to get myself that golden ticket!"

"This is a very long story, but I will summarize by saying I was inspired by my grandparents to consider medicine in elementary school. From then through high school, I noticed that I really loved learning the sciences. I decided to take it a step further and start shadowing physicians and researchers. The research lab was a good experience, but I found medicine to be much more interesting. From there I shadowed more physicians in different fields and thought that I would love to be a doctor some day."

"I originally started college as an undeclared student with absolutely no idea what I wanted to major in or do for the rest of my life. I had seriously considered everything from education to business to computer science, but ultimately found myself gravitating towards healthcare by the end of my 1<sup>st</sup> year. I explored all the different career options in the field, volunteering in various hospitals and working as a clinical research assistant in Rheumatology to help me figure it out. However, it wasn't until the end of my 3<sup>rd</sup> year while working in an OB/GYN's office as a medical assistant that everything seemed to fall into place. Not only did I love learning more about medicine, but I was truly inspired by the positive impact and relationships the doctor had with his patients. I saw new mothers at their postpartum visit so excited to show the doctor how much their baby had grown. I heard older patients tell stories about how the doctor delivered all four of their children. I even saw someone who the doctor had delivered come in for her first prenatal visit. It was apparent he had changed these people's lives for the better, something I hope to accomplish myself as a doctor."

"I grew up on the island of Saipan, a U.S. territory in the Western Pacific, where high-quality health care was thousands of miles away. I witnessed the effects of inadequate healthcare on locals and even some of my own family members. My love for STEM, coupled with my first-hand experiences of navigating a needy healthcare system, sparked my initial interest to become a doctor. After moving to the mainland with my family, I fortunately got into a health careers program at my new high school, which gave me an early glimpse into the world of healthcare and medicine. I therefore went into college as a pre-medical student and explored various opportunities - research, peer health education, shadowing physicians, and working with people struggling with addiction - that helped reinforce my desire to pursue medicine. I wouldn't say that I had an "aha" moment in my path to medical school per se, but rather a combination of experiences throughout my life that deepened my passion for medicine."

"I was extremely fortunate to be involved in HOSA throughout high school and college. HOSA provided countless opportunities for early exposure to healthcare. I found myself to be extremely inspired by the experiences I had through HOSA: shadowing in the operating room, seeing my first open heart surgery, attending leadership conferences, volunteering in clinics, and eventually starting a career in one of our local hospitals. The culmination of my experiences throughout life, including HOSA, have inspired me to pursue a career in medicine."

"I decided to pursue a career in medicine during my Junior year in college. I had always been fascinated in human biology and pursuing a career in medicine since high school, but I was also interested in engineering when I got to college. I was majoring in bioengineering, which I found to be the best of both worlds. However, from my physician shadowing experiences I realized that I was more passionate about the opportunity to interact and provide direct care for people, more so than doing biomedical research."



**Q: What major steps did you take in college and/or post-graduation to help your application or better prepare you for medical school?**

"I definitely tried to take medically relevant courses, even if they weren't a medical school prerequisite. Some of the most rewarding classes were physiology and biology of cancer. I met some of the best teachers I've ever had in those classes, and the content that I've learned are concepts I continue to use in medical school now. Fast forward to my post-baccalaureate program, `Imi Ho`ola. This is where I really was able to solidify my basic science knowledge and also practice going through the process of PBL. There were definitely major bumps in between my journey towards medical school, but I don't regret having to encounter them, because I wouldn't be as prepared for medical as I am now if I hadn't. It really made me believe that everything happens for a reason and for that I am so grateful for the lessons I've learned."

"To make sure I could get a strong MCAT score, I dedicated an entire summer to studying. I took a break from work and studied as if it were a full-time job. After that, (this probably isn't the "prepare" the prompt is asking but) I "prepared" myself for medical school by seizing opportunities that I might not have later. For example, I was very glad I decided to take a lot of art classes, such as ceramics, even though I was a Chemistry major. I was also fortunate to have been able to study abroad, where I took a course on the Danish healthcare system. Make the most out of your college experience if you can!"

"The most useful experience I had prior to medical school was working as a medical scribe in emergency departments in Boston and Hawaii. The experience not only taught me useful medical terminology, how to write notes, and the flow of a patient's visit, but it also gave me a deeper dive into how doctors think (something that is especially useful in PBL) and pushed me outside of my comfort zone into a new fast paced environment. While I would HIGHLY recommend scribing to anybody who is interested, I'd also like to emphasize that it is in no way necessary to learn these things prior to medical school. Do what you love, not just something you think will look good for your medical school application - I think it will show."

"During college, I took advantage of multiple opportunities that I knew would prepare me for a career in medicine. I conducted basic science research to better understand the thought processes and scientific methodologies that advance medicine. I volunteered with the homeless and those struggling with addiction, to understand the importance of destigmatization and harm reduction among marginalized groups. I helped fellow college students navigate issues related to their health and well being as a peer health educator. I shadowed physicians to get a better sense of what they did on a daily basis. These experiences, along with diligence and careful planning, helped me prepare for and gain acceptance to medical school."

"After graduating college, I worked as an Anesthesia Tech for a few years. During that time, I traveled and did a lot of self-reflection. I wanted to be absolutely sure I wanted to go into medicine. Having a career in healthcare and being a part of the patient care team really solidified my desire to go to medical school to become a physician."

"I graduated and dedicated that following summer to studying for the MCAT. This allowed me to focus all my energy on getting the best MCAT score that I could. While studying, I also started working as a medical scribe in the emergency department. I continued this job after I finished studying, and I feel that it helped prepared me for medical school because I learned a lot of medical terminology, learned a wide range of patient diagnoses, and experienced the medical decision making process in an acute setting by working with many different physicians. The most important thing I gained was the clinical experience because I learned a lot of clinically relevant information and also it helped further strengthen my passion for medicine as a career."

**Q: Would you have done anything differently regarding the application process if you could do it again? Anything that worked well for you and would recommend to others if you had to do it again?**

“Like I mentioned previously, I don’t regret the way that things went and I applied giving the best that I possibly could. And I think the best piece of advice I can give is that you should apply when you’re ready, not because you feel pressured that you need to apply by a certain time. Prepare to the best of your ability and put your best foot out there. And if it works out, then awesome! But if it doesn’t, it’s just a minor bump in the road that so many of us go through, so don’t be discouraged. Use it as fuel to improve your application even more the next time around!”

“I would have tried to keep up with logging of all of my activities better, since the application requires that you report the number of hours you spent with each activity. I would highly recommend keeping a spreadsheet of your hours along with any memorable feelings or moments. This will help a lot when writing your mini-essays about each activity, as well as with designating which ones you would consider your most valuable experiences.”

“Do better on the MCAT the first time? I’m just kidding (kind of...). But really, if I could go back in time and do it all again, I would have tried to be less hard on myself when things didn’t go as planned. In college, I was the type of person who liked to plan the next 5 years of my life down to what class I was going to take with what professor 3 years in the future. When I ended up needing to take a gap year instead of applying straight through (stupid MCAT!), I was devastated. It made me question my ability to make it in medicine and had me wondering if it was really all worth it. Now looking back at it all, I think it was these setbacks that make me a better medical student and future doctor. This one in particular ingrained in me better study habits that have prepared me for the rigors of medical school as well as allowed me to question my own motives and come out the other side as sure as ever that medicine is where I belong. Something one of my mentors shared with me that really put things into perspective was, “Imagine getting into medical school/becoming a doctor and facing no struggles? How would you know it was the right field for you? How would your interactions with patients and your colleges differ? How would you handle the inevitable challenges of medicine?” As corny as it may sound, I truly believe that everything happens for a reason and that you are exactly where you need to be. Stay positive, learn from the setbacks, and if medicine is truly what you want to do, it will be worth it in the end.”

“I think it is important to choose wisely which medical schools you are applying to (use MSAR to help you make these important decisions!). If you receive multiple interviews, try to schedule them close to one another (especially if the schools are within proximity to each other) so that you can save time and money not having to travel back and forth. Medical school applications can be costly, so start saving money now. Also, to avoid stressing yourself out during application season, try to begin working on your personal statement as early as possible. Don’t be like me and spend just a few weeks crafting one of

the most important essays in your life 😞 Have your essays proofread not only by people who know you well, but also by those who don’t. Lastly, apply when you feel ready - medical school will always be there!”

“I wouldn’t have done anything differently. I am extremely happy with the path I’ve taken. I felt that my “slide years” were very valuable in shaping who I am today. There are so many paths to medical school and there isn’t a wrong or right one. My recommendation is to pick a path that makes YOU happy and is true to YOU. If you want to travel in your early 20s before you commit yourself to a lifelong career, GO FOR IT! But definitely be mindful of your time off. Use it wisely and be productive.”

"I don't regret how everything turned out since I did the best I could each time applying, and I used my gap years to better prepare myself for medical school. But here are some thoughts:

Things that worked for me:

- Dedicating study time for the MCAT. I knew I wouldn't be able to study 100% for the MCAT while I was doing my bioengineering projects, research, and classes. I wanted to dedicate my focus to getting a good score even if it meant taking a gap year.
- Gap year(s). I needed a gap year to make my application more competitive. The clinical experiences that I had during my gap years were invaluable in preparing me for medical school and helped me gain real-world medical knowledge.

Things that I would have done differently:

- Apply to more schools to increase my odds of getting accepted.
- Seek more advice during the application process. I wish I pursued more advice from my counselors for clarification on the application process and requirements. I also should have asked for more help with editing my personal statement, essays, or mock interviews."

**Q: Any other words of advice for prospective applicants applying this cycle?**

"Read your application again before going in for an interview. Be honest and remember why you want to go into the field!"

"My advice would be to have faith in what you have done thus far because even applying to medical school is a huge feat that you should be proud of. You worked hard to get to this point, and now it is just about putting your best foot forward. Also, this is the time if you haven't already to reflect on who you are, what you stand for, and what you want to accomplish through a career in medicine (believe me, your primary, secondaries, and interviews will ask you a million times over!)"

"I know COVID-19 has kinda put everything - including this year's application cycle - in a state of flux. My advice would be to keep up-to-date with how COVID-19 is affecting AMCAS, the MCAT, and each of the schools you are applying to. I think application deadlines have been extended, so this gives you more time to make those final essay revisions. Try to find others who are applying this cycle and keep each other updated and reassured. Also, don't forget about your mentors! They can help you navigate these uncharted seas."

"N/A. Please check out the slides from our AMCAS workshop event!"

"1) Don't apply until you are absolutely ready: this is a marathon and there is no rush to apply, especially if it might be detrimental to your MCAT or grades. Don't be afraid to take a gap year, but if you do, make sure it is productive: ie. gaining clinical or research experience or graduate degree.  
2) Have grit. I didn't get accepted my first application cycle. If you do get rejections, don't give up and always keep moving forward by doing something to improve either your app or yourself."

**Q: Any thoughts on the COVID-19 pandemic?**

"I know it can be a scary and uncertain time. And it is filled with so many mixed emotions. Be smart about your decisions. Stay updated-- look for reliable sources of news but don't crowd your mind with it either, try to find a balance. And most importantly, stay hopeful. I think what's helpful is finding something that helps you decompress in these times of social isolation. Please take care of your mental and physical health! And soon enough, together, we'll come out of this stronger than ever. Be well! Me ke aloha." -Sharon

"Try not to spend the entire day looking at the latest news about the pandemic. While it is important to be updated with new information, please take the time to do things you love or try new things you might love! I've started to practice music and paint again, which has helped me to relax and enjoy my study breaks." -Eileen

"I think it is safe to say that most of us are still adjusting to and trying to figure out how to best stay sane in this pandemic. My advice would be to address/take care of your mental health. If you can, spend time with your family, skype a friend, read a book, take up a new hobby, take a walk outside (while maintaining social distancing of course), or seek professional help if that is what you need. I think it is easy to minimize our struggles with mental health (I know I'm definitely guilty of this), especially when so much stigma exists in our world about it. However, the application process, medical school, residency, and honestly the field of medicine can be very stressful. If you can find strategies to address and maintain your own mental wellbeing now, you will thank yourself later." -Eryn

"I know things can be a little scary right now. My recommendation would be to try your best to keep an optimistic mindset. Find the good in the world around you. Stay healthy and safe. Physically distance yourself from others, but don't *socially* distance yourself. Your friends and family are there for you! Also, you're going to be a doctor - you have the resilience to get through these uncertain times. We can all get through this together!

*"Do not go gentle into that good night...Rage, rage against the dying of the light."* -Dylan Thomas"  
-Josh

"I know these are scary and uncertain times, but do your best to stay safe and healthy. I absolutely love this video and its message about the quarantine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snAhsXyO3Ck>. Let's come out of this quarantine even better than before!" -Jenna

"Find a new "normal" routine for balancing studying, family, and personal health. The effects of this will not completely go away anytime soon, if at all. Instead of waiting for COVID to end before being productive, use this time to focus on physical and mental health, stress management, and spending more time with family. One of the few things you can control is your attitude, so just try to find the positives in these times and make the most out of this situation. We will get through this!" -Drew



## Pre-Med Resource List (with hyperlinks)

### [UH Manoa Pre-Health Advising Center \(PAC\)](#)

- Contains an abundance of information and resources regarding medical school: prerequisite courses, advising, volunteering and shadowing opportunities, research opportunities, pre-med programs, MCAT prep advice, and much more.

### [AHEC Health Career Navigator](#)

- A great comprehensive guide for pre-healthcare students. There are two versions — this guide helps you to plan your future in healthcare so be sure to check it out!

### [AAMC MSAR](#)

- Medical school admission requirements all in one place. Provides information on school-specific applicant average GPA & MCAT, letters of recommendation, course requirements, and much more. You need to purchase an annual subscription, but you should also be able to access the site for free on the PAC computers.

### [AAMC MCAT](#)

- Where to register for the MCAT along with FAQs

### [JABSOM Admissions Website](#)

- Check out JABSOM's admission requirements!

### [Imi Hoola Post-baccalaureate Program](#)

- Imi Hoola is program within the Department of Native Hawaiian Health that accepts up to 12 students each year from economic, social, and/or educational disadvantaged backgrounds, who demonstrate a commitment to practice in underserved communities. Completion of the 12-month program results in entrance into JABSOM as 1st year medical students.

### [AHEC Pre-Health Career Corps](#)

- PHCC is an organization that provides access to an abundance of resources and involvement opportunities!

### [MSMP Website](#)

- Check out our website!

## Friendly Reminders

- If you are unable to contact your mentor despite multiple attempts or have any other problems or conflicts, please let us know at [msmp.jabsom@gmail.com](mailto:msmp.jabsom@gmail.com)
- STAY HEALTHY & SAFE :)