

Health Professions Advising Program

MAJORS

Salisbury University offers the following majors that lead directly to health care employment:

- Athletic Training
- Medical Lab Science
- Nursing
- Respiratory Therapy

Health-related majors and programs at Salisbury University include:

- Community Health
- Exercise Science
- Health Education
- Social Work
- Applied Health Physiology (master's)
- Nurse practitioner (doctorate - anticipated starting fall 2012)

HPAP Overview

Health care career choices are plentiful, and Salisbury University has an infrastructure to help students find the best career for them and develop their knowledge and talents to gain acceptance into their desired program/school.

At SU, a small school atmosphere is coupled with large school opportunities. Admission into health care programs, especially graduate programs, is contingent not just on good grades but also on quality extracurricular experiences. Here's a sample of what SU offers:

- Dedicated faculty and staff with low student: faculty ratios and multiple opportunities for one-on-one interactions
- Focus on undergraduate research and achievement, including the Henson Research Program, Guerrieri Undergraduate Research Summer Program and the Henson Scholars Program
- Faculty advisors and research mentors who encourage research, presentation and publication
- Organized activities through the Health Professions Advising Program and Career Services
- Tutoring and other academic assistance, with department resources, the Center for Student Achievement and the Writing Center
- Off-campus experiences, such as the SU Volunteer Center and a physician-shadowing program
- Alumni contacts

Choosing A Major

Students typically ask what major is needed for a health care career. It's been said, "If you're employed at something you love, you'll never work a day in your life." Students want the "right" major, but they really must major in something they like and would want to do. Graduates must be well-rounded in both sciences and liberal arts. They must be able to think, read, write and speak well. Students must perform well in General Education courses, as well as prerequisite courses for a chosen

CAREERS

The Health Professions Advising Program (HPAP) assists students interested in post-baccalaureate health care careers in:

- Medicine
- Dentistry
- Physical Therapy
- Pharmacy
- Veterinary Medicine
- Optometry
- Podiatry
- Physician Assistant
- And More ...

profession. Regarding undergraduate academic majors, the first thing to consider is health care majors versus non-health care majors.

The undergraduate majors at SU leading *directly* to health care employment are athletic training, medical lab science, nursing and respiratory therapy. Health-related undergraduate majors include exercise science, health education, community health and social work. SU also offers two graduate programs, applied health physiology and nurse practitioner. Students can go on to post-baccalaureate health professions schools after any these majors if they also take the school prerequisites along with the regular curriculum. The advantages to this are desirable clinical hours built into the degree, exposure

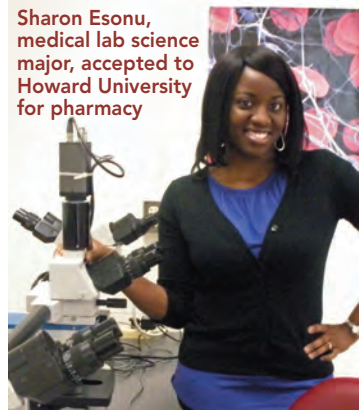
Chris Runion, philosophy major, accepted to Ross University for veterinary medicine



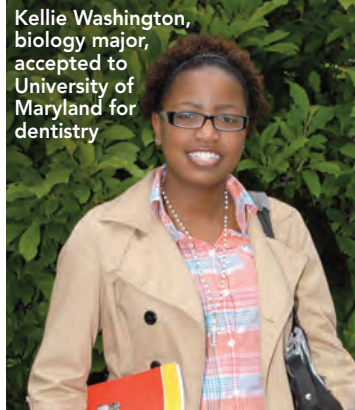
to the health care settings to insure a good career choice and immediately employability with the degree. One disadvantage is that it can be difficult to get all courses completed in four years and maintain a high GPA. Other disadvantages are that these majors are very specialized in health care and have fewer opportunities in the liberal arts and sciences, including earning minors that would enhance resumes and/or assist in preparation for entrance exams.

Students should also know that no particular major helps or harms their chances for professional school. Should students select a non-health care major, they can still take prerequisites for various professional schools, but other options are kept open such as scientific research, teaching and so on. It is always a good idea to have more than one potential career in mind in case grades are not optimal or career interests change as education progresses. Having a more traditional major also permits a well-rounded education, including a minor that might enhance professional school applications (foreign language, gerontology, business, psychology, etc.). Further, students interested in health care do not have to be science majors. For example, the total median score on the 2007 MCAT entrance exam was 28.7 for humanities majors, 27.2 for

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Sharon Esonu, medical lab science major, accepted to Howard University for pharmacy



Kellie Washington, biology major, accepted to University of Maryland for dentistry



Alicia Canzanese, exercise science major, accepted to podiatry school

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information:
HPAP@salisbury.edu

www.salisbury.edu/henson/hpap

SALISBURY

Stephanie Pollitt, exercise science major, accepted to University of Maryland Eastern Shore for physical therapy



Erin Senkbeil, chemistry major, through SU's accelerated program accepted to University of Maryland School of Pharmacy



Michael Simpson, applied health physiology master's, accepted to Eastern Virginia Medical School for physician assistant

biology majors and 27.1 for social science majors, indicating that exam performance was roughly equal between science and non-science majors. Traditional majors should know that they probably will have to get medical experience hours outside of class work (job shadowing, service learning, jobs, etc.) for professional school applications and must plan for the fact that they cannot go directly into a health care job after graduation.

Student Success at SU

Students also commonly want to know how successful SU students are at gaining admission to the program of their choice. This is not a simple answer. Mark Twain famously stated that there are “lies, damned lies and

statistics.” Trying to boil down the experiences of hundreds of unique SU students into simple statistics is inaccurate at best and grossly misleading at worst. When we resist providing the simple “percentage of people who got in,” it is not because we are withholding information. It is because we want to engage students in a conversation about what is required to get into health profession schools, what they can do to realize that achievement and what we do to help. We also want to discuss important milestones—grades, clinical experience, entrance exam scores—so that students can judge for themselves whether or not they are realistic candidates for highly competitive fields.

It is critical to understand that admission to SU does not guarantee admission into the undergraduate on-campus health care majors (athletic training, medical lab science, nursing and respiratory therapy). During the sophomore year, students interested in these majors must submit an application to the chosen major, and admission is competitive based on available space, student grades and other criteria. The admission rate and the average GPA of those admitted varies considerably each year due to the applicant pool. Students interested in these majors must simply get the best grades possible.

Similarly, students interested in post-baccalaureate health care careers also must earn the best grades possible.

Further, they often must take entrance exams (MCAT, DAT, PCAT, GRE, etc.) and be judged not only on GPA but also on exam scores. Clinical experiences and exploration/extracurricular activities are also evaluated. Exploration activities include those which are medically related and community service as well as research and fun. Student athletes who can balance the demands of a sport with academic demands are well-respected. Students must show a broad array of abilities and experiences and be very self-motivated. However, SU does provide support services through individual advisors within majors who are trained at health care advising, Career Services programs and the Health Professions Advising Program. At SU, when students apply themselves, earn competitive grades and exam scores and follow recommendations from academic advisors, they are historically accepted into professional schools.

Preparing for a Career In Health Care

Students are their own best advocates and should become expert in their chosen profession. There is as wealth of self-education information available on various health care careers, both familiar and unfamiliar. If students want to be something, they should be able to describe what the career entails, why they want to do that job, what courses are required and what

schools offer the program. Job shadowing is invaluable to determine career suitability. Students often spend a day watching a job and discover it is exactly what they want or completely different than what they expected. Geographic areas and school types are very individual choices, so everyone should start researching which schools offer programs of interest and what they require in terms of courses, GPA, entrance exam scores, clinical hours and so forth. First and foremost, however, students must work hard academically. Every class and every grade is important. There is little, if anything, one can do to make up for weak grades or weak scores on entrance exams. Incoming freshmen to SU are advised not to get overly involved in job shadowing and outside activities. *A firm academic foundation is the absolute first priority.*

The Health Professions Advising Program (HPAP) has a Web site—www.salisbury.edu/henson/hpap—that is updated periodically with on-campus events and new information. Questions can be sent any time to HPAP@salisbury.edu

SU's Career Services also maintains an excellent Web site www.salisbury.edu/careerservices/Students/GraduateSchool/Health.html.

At this exciting time when such important decisions are being made, the HPAP wishes students the very best and stands ready to help.



Matthew Ng, respiratory therapy major, accepted to Rosalind Franklin Medical School for medicine

www.salisbury.edu/henson/hpap

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