

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS ADVISING CENTER (HPAC)

ANNUAL REPORT

**2022-2023
INAUGURAL
YEAR**



QR Code to [HPAC website](#)





Health Professions Advising Center

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

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HPAC Team

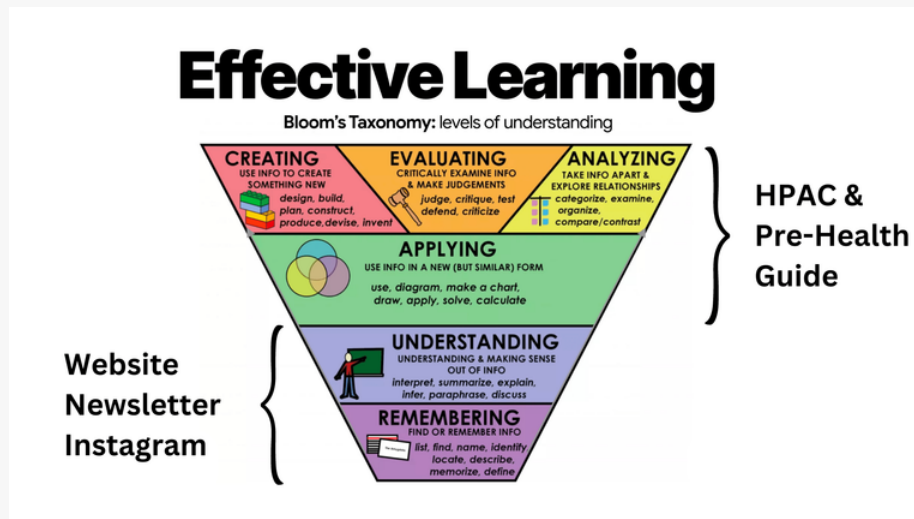
HPAC MISSION

The Health Professions Advising Center (HPAC) is the central pre-health office for undergraduate students and alumni across all colleges and schools at Cornell University. Pre-health advising at HPAC is a data-driven, collaborative process that helps Cornell students and alumni make informed decisions regarding their pre-health journey and application to medical, dental, optometry, podiatry, physician assistant, pharmacy, nursing, occupational therapy, chiropractic, physical therapy, speech language pathology, and other professional health programs.

Pre-health advisors provide expertise and guidance on curricular and co-curricular requirements, standardized testing, application preparation as well as other academic and personal resources available at Cornell. Our mission is to provide iterative and developmental advising, not prescriptive advice, focusing on joint problem-solving to help meet the changing and diverse needs of applicants.

Through our various resources, we hope students and alumni will accomplish the following learning objectives:

- [Explore](#) different pre-health tracks.
- Learn about [academic requirements](#) and which [co-curricular experiences](#) would be relevant for chosen profession.
- Learn about the process of [applying](#) to chosen health professional school.
- Know and understand how and when to utilize HPAC resources and pre-health advisors.
- Understand the role they play in shaping their pre-health journey.



**In the taxonomy graphic above, HPAC is defined as utilizing workshops, events, webinars, appointments, pre-health advisors, the Pre-Health Peer Leaders, and the pre-health peer community.*

We strive to be an inclusive space of respect and compassionate understanding, where every member of our campus community and alumni networks may feel seen, accepted, safe, and celebrated. We seek and welcome diverse perspectives and experiences to flourish in our personal and professional endeavors.

To learn more about HPAC listen to the All Things Equal podcast here:

<https://whcuradio.com/podcasts/all-things-equal-11-8-22/>



MEET OUR TEAM

Rachael Perry, Director



Rachael Perry (she/her) joined Cornell in June 2022 as the Founding Director of Health Professions Advising, overseeing the expansion of Pre-Health advising services on campus.

Rachael earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Keuka College, where she was also a two-time captain of the varsity women's volleyball team, and a master's degree in Student Affairs Administration from Binghamton University. Prior to Cornell, she served as the assistant dean for enrollment management and student affairs at Binghamton University School of

Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, leading efforts in student support interventions and overseeing the school's recruitment and admissions process.

With over a decade of experience working with college students, Rachael has a deep commitment to holistic student well-being and development that guides her in assisting students. Having worked as a Pre-Health advisor at Binghamton University, she has experience to prepare students to become competitive applicants to graduate-level health professions programs. This experience allowed her to shape the Binghamton School of Pharmacy holistic review process and guide the pharmacy admissions committee with best practices to achieve enrollment goals. Rachael was an integral member in the development of the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, serving on the Pharmacy Leadership Team, three accreditation self-study committees, the Committee on Awards and Progression, and serving as the chief student affairs officer for the school. Rachael also served as a professional mentor for the Binghamton University Scholar's Program.

In her free time, Rachael enjoys hiking, skiing and traveling.

Dr. Barbara Oh, Associate Director



Dr. Barbara Oh earned her B.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology, with a minor in Business at Cornell University focusing her research on entrepreneurship in higher education. Through her graduate research, she gained tech startup experience in Silicon Valley. At Cornell, Barbara has worked in academic and career advising, admissions, student academic success, teaching, and research. At HPAC, Barbara's portfolio includes strategic program development and assessment, advising, and alumni engagement. She engages with the

community through Neurodiversity@Cornell, CAAAN (Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network), the Staff of Color Colleague Network Group on BIPOC Employment Solutions, CAAA (Cornell Asian Alumni Association), advising Chromatic at Cornell, and continuing DEI/DEIA work. In her free time, Barbara likes to take pictures of nature, read biographies, watch documentaries about history and dinosaurs, and keep up with F1 racing.

Nikki Wells, Associate Director



Nikki came to Cornell in 2016 after spending time as a Career Counselor at Ithaca College and Area Coordinator in Residence Life at SUNY Geneseo. Her education includes a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology, and a Master of Education in Higher Education Administration and Student Affairs from the University at Buffalo. She loves to connect with students and help them succeed in and out of the classroom. Nikki often provides advocacy, support, and communication on behalf of students experiencing

challenges in their lives that may impact their academic performance and ability to thrive at Cornell. When she's not in the office, Nikki can be found building inclusive and healthy community while teaching group fitness classes at FLX Fitclub. Her favorite vacation spots include the beach, cruise ships, any Disney park, and Italy.

Robyn Leary, Assistant Director



Robyn (she/her) joined the Cornell community in January 2022 and is passionate about her current role in HPAC supporting students interested in health professions. Originally from Vermont, Robyn is an alumna of Ithaca College and has over 5 years of professional experience supporting students in higher education. Prior to joining HPAC, she worked with the Office of Career Services in the ILR School at Cornell, advising students on resumes, cover letters, practice interviews, and career resources. She appreciates every opportunity to meet new people and learn about their strengths and aspirations. Outside of work, Robyn enjoys outdoor activities, traveling, cooking/baking, reading, and going to local restaurants. She also has a calico cat named Sunny.

Taylor Larkin, Program Coordinator



Taylor was born and raised in Ithaca, NY. She earned her B.S. from Syracuse University and her M.S. from Ithaca College in health and exercise physiology. In previous roles, Taylor served populations in the Ithaca area, through the provision of educational programming and resources. Taylor is new to Cornell University and is excited to utilize her health background and professional skills in her position within the HPAC team!

Inaugural Pre-Health
Peer Leader Team
(More on page: 12)



HPAC IMPACT

In its inaugural year, HPAC focused on meaningful, developmental engagement with students and alumni, with the intent of building a new, inclusive pre-health community at Cornell. Our initial advising team began meeting with students/alumni in mid-September. We offered general pre-health advising, practice interview, and 50 min Pre-Application Discussion Appointments, drop in hours and workshops. We also held First Year and Sophomore/Transfer Student Class Meetings to introduce HPAC and help pre-health students get started in the exploration journey at the beginning of both the Fall and Spring semesters.

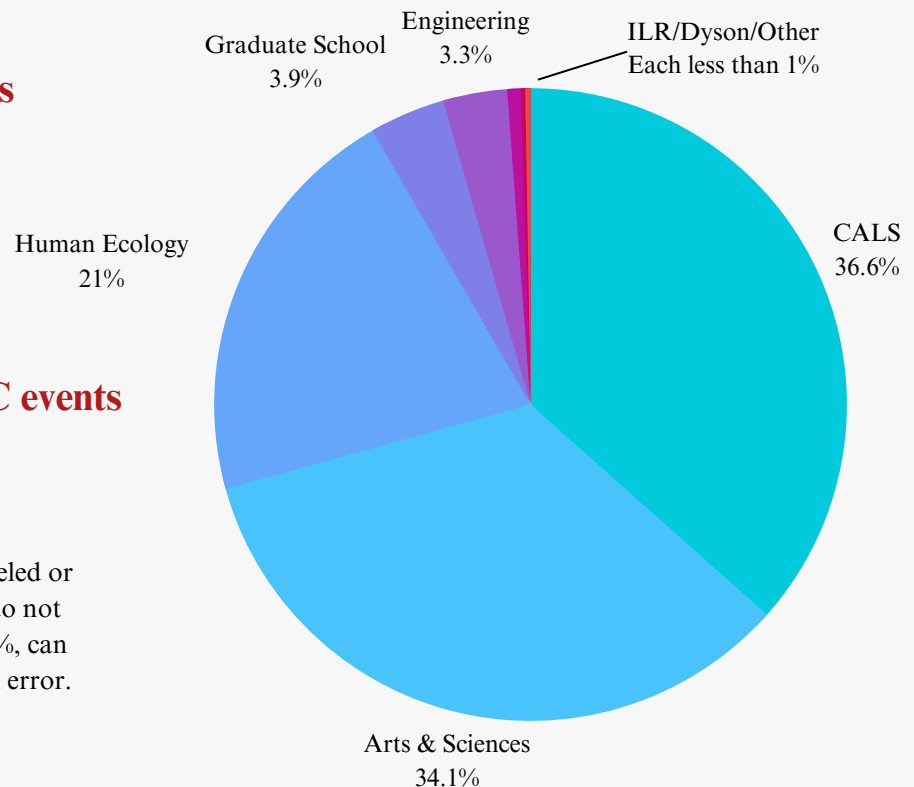
HPAC held **1,860** unique student/alumni meetings, 1,518 which were scheduled (~81.6%) and 341 were drop in (~18.3%)*. College/school breakdown can be found in the pie chart below. Alumni (classified as class years 2022 and earlier) accounted for 672 appointments, while current students (class years of 2023-2026, including graduate and professional students) accounted for 1,180 appointments. We logged **450** participants to all HPAC events for the 2022-2023 academic year.

1,860 unique appointments

1,180 current students

672 alumni

450 participants to HPAC events



*Please note, some meetings get canceled or are not held when students/alumni do not show. Data margin of error is ~0.05%, can be attributed to manual entry/human error.

In October 2022, we held our first open house/meet and greet, inviting colleges/schools, campus partners, stakeholders, students/alumni, staff and faculty, and community members to learn more about HPAC. We featured several pre-health student organizations, including the brand new Pre-PA club, CASPHA, and more.

In the same month, we launched our new Applicant Canvas Course through the application kick off meeting. In our Applicant Canvas Course, there are **847** self-enrolled participants who engaged in modules to thoroughly determine readiness, prepare, and complete the self-reflection exercises in anticipation of applying to various health profession schools.



HPAC's First Meet and Greet

Intro Prepare Reflect Resources Done!

The goal is to apply once the *entire* candidacy is in place.

What key factors determine readiness?

Medical, dental, podiatry and optometry schools use "Holistic Review" to evaluate your candidacy. They look at you as a "whole applicant," not just numbers on a page. Yes, they do look for excellent metrics (e.g. GPA, MCAT/DAT score), but they also look at your background, experiences, and factors that make you unique! You can think about metrics as being "necessary, but not sufficient."

[Holistic Review](#) [Academic Excellence](#) [Clinical Experience](#)
[Community Service](#) [Research](#) [Personal Characteristics](#)

Canvas Course: Readiness

Readiness - What are the "Core Competencies"?

Intro Prepare Reflect Resources Done!

The 15 Core Competencies for entering medical students are defined below. These are the skills and traits that ensure success in first-year medical students. Essentially, this is your rubric for readiness! Have you demonstrated all 15 competencies?

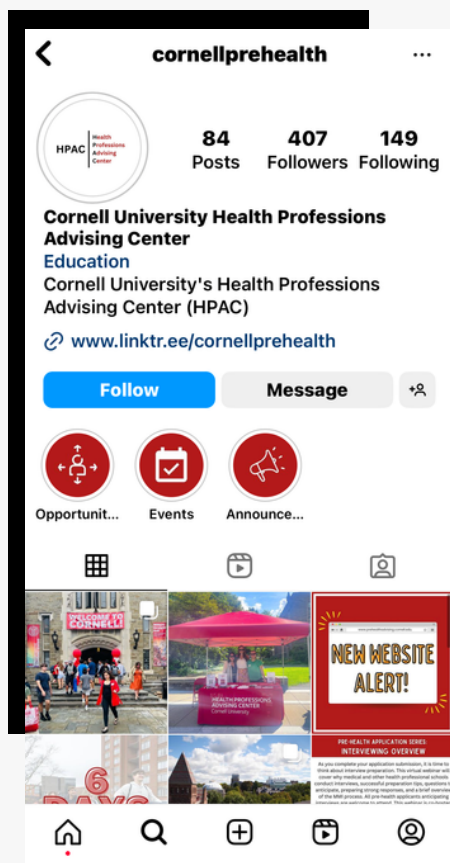
[These competencies](#) have been developed by the AAMC Group on Student Affairs (GSA) Committee on Admissions (COA). The competencies fall into four categories: Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Thinking and Reasoning, and Science.

Canvas Course: Core Competencies

Throughout the year, we engaged with students/alumni through our Pop Up Lunch Series around campus, Learn to Love Networking session and the Tatkon Center Career Expo and presented a series of workshops on applying to health profession schools including topics on the anatomy of an application, letters of recommendation, school selection, personal statement, and situational judgement tests (SJTs). In the summer, we also provided workshops on secondary applications and interviewing (co-sponsored with Cornell Career Services), including a week long MMI (multiple mini interview) simulation, along with Live Chat Sessions through Canvas for current applicants, and Virtual AMAs (Ask me Anything Sessions) for new/incoming students. We logged **450** participants to all HPAC events for the 2022-2023 academic year.

The [HPAC newsletter](#) is a resource with useful information about programs, events, employment opportunities, deadlines, and more pertinent to all those on a Pre-Health track. We also have special editions for current applicants as well as new/incoming students, with tailored information.

In the 2022-2023 academic year, we published **41** newsletters, had **2,700+** subscribers, and an average open rate of over **61%**.



HPAC Instagram: end of Summer 2023

Our [Instagram](#) provides helpful reminders of events and upcoming deadlines, tips and strategies for MCAT prep/application season/life at Cornell, featured current applicants and matriculants to health professional schools, and more. We also feature our HPAC team around campus, at events, and more. We hope to continue building our pre-health community and share widely our achievements and successes!

Scan the QR code below to explore our [Instagram](#) page.



In the summer of 2023, we launched a new iteration of the HPAC website. It was redesigned with feedback from a student/alumni focus group, including support from our HCAN (Health Careers Advising Network) colleagues, to increase user friendliness and accessibility. The compact website is designed to introduce resources on exploring, preparing, and applying to health profession schools, while our associated Pre-Health Guide (through Canvas) will delve deeper with dedicated modules for students in the exploration phase of their pre-health journey and pre-medical, pre-dental, and pre-PA application modules.

Explore different educational and experiential requirements, learn about career growth and trajectories, and discover what a “day in the life” looks like. Identify what core values are important to you and determine what career pathway aligns with your vision of success, including a work/life balance that works for you. We encourage you to keep a journal of your thought process.

Healthcare Professions

[Allopathic
Medicine
\(MD\)](#)

[Physician
Assistant
\(PA\)](#)

[Dental
Medicine
\(DDS,
DMD\)](#)

[Osteopathic
Medicine
\(DO\)](#)

[Optometric
Medicine
\(OD\)](#)

[Podiatric
Medicine
\(DPM\)](#)

[Veterinary
Medicine
\(DVM\)](#)

[Other
Direct Care
Professions](#)

[Dual
Degree
Pathways](#)

HPAC Website

Become an Interesting Applicant

As you explore, prepare, and apply to a health professional school, keep in mind that the admissions review process is truly holistic. Many candidates will have similar grades, scores, and experiences; however, the insightful and unique things you have to say about what was learned, distinguishes you from others.

It is important to also cultivate qualitative characteristics that help admissions determine you are the right fit for their school/program. The following are some areas to consider:

Maturity	Resilience	Executive Function
Stress Management	Professional Judgement	Situational Awareness
Time Management	Conflict Resolution	Adaptability
Ability to think on your feet	Intellectual curiosity	Empathy

HPAC Website

Our long-term plans include building additional modules for podiatry, optometry, and other applicants to health profession schools, along with modules on additional resources such as networking strategies, interview preparation, preparing for secondaries, creating a meaningful school list, and managing uncertainty and building resilience. The website and Pre-Health Guide will work in tandem with HPAC advisors, events, pre-health peer leaders, and new programming we're very excited to launch in the 2023-2024 academic year to better support our students/alumni.

Pre-Health Peer Leaders

A diverse group of student leader volunteers from a cross-section of colleges, schools, and majors at Cornell are essential members of the team who work closely with the HPAC staff to execute the vision of an inclusive and welcoming pre-health community. In spring 2023, 13 rising junior and rising senior student volunteers were selected via an application process to form the inaugural group of Pre-health Peer Leaders for academic year 2023-2024. These leaders within the pre-health community will assist the HPAC staff to develop and implement programs, workshops, and events, contribute to an online social media presence (e.g. Instagram and Discord), hold weekly informal drop-in conversation hours for first and second year students exploring options in human or animal health careers and upper class students planning applications to MD/DO/DDS/Veterinary and PA schools, and collaborate with existing student clubs, organizations, and mentoring programs (such as PATCH, P3, and Pre-Vet Society) to promote a unified pre-health student network. The goal of the Pre-Health Peer Leader role is to support and encourage students with a desire to pursue a career in medicine through peer-to-peer interactions and referrals to resources.



PHPL Team in Summer Training



PHPL Team in Summer Training

HPAC ENGAGEMENT

HPAC hosted several events including an Alumni Dual Degree panel, an Admitted Students Panel, conversations with Medical School Admissions Deans on Personal Statements, A Day in the Life of Oculoplastic Surgeon and Cornell Alum, Dr. Jessica Lattman Class of '90, and an Alumni Doctor Dialogue with Cornell Alum, Dr. Anne Jones Class of '04.



Alumni Talk



Cornell Pre-Health Community

HPAC also participated in Cornell Giving Day. We raised over \$600 in our first ever engagement. With the generous contribution of our donors, we are one step closer to building an inclusive pre-health community at Cornell University, through program development, experiential opportunities, mentorship, and lowering financial barriers. We are tremendously grateful for our donors' support! Thank you to our Alumni Affairs and Development team as well! To learn more please visit <https://givingday.cornell.edu/campaigns/hpac>

<https://givingday.cornell.edu/campaigns/hpac>

Thank You

STUDENT & ALUMNI VOICES



HPAC in the Cornell Community

Our team is deeply grateful for the opportunity to build the HPAC office, and it was critically important for us to hold space for conversations with colleges/schools and campus partners and to gather meaningful, real-time feedback from our students and alumni. We understand that to better support and guide our pre-health community, we need to learn how the demographic of students we work with changes and adapt to their emerging needs (especially post-graduation), along with keenly understanding the health profession school admissions process and broader healthcare landscape. To that end, our HPAC team attended professional meetings in the North East region, presented at advising and teaching/learning conferences, and built new partnerships with local community partners, the All Ivy Pre-Health Community, admissions deans and committees at various schools and programs, and Weill Cornell. In our efforts to learn, grow, and evolve, we've gathered thoughts from our students and alumni, implementing short term solutions for immediate impact, and creating strategies for long term implementation for down the road. We share next some of their thoughts on our progress so far.

Established in 2021, the Pre-PA (Physician Assistant) Association at Cornell (PPAAC) has partnered with HPAC to increase meaningful support of pre-PA students and alumni. Our preliminary data shows that pre-PA applicants are the second largest pre-health group at Cornell. With our newly formed partnership, HPAC has participated in PPAAC general body meetings and guest lectures, community outreach, applicant



Pre-PA Association @ Cornell

advocacy with PA programs around the country, and building resources on the HPAC website and Applicant Canvas course. We have long-term plans to continue working with our pre-PA students and alumni to increase HPAC resources and implement a dedicated PA Applicant module in our new Pre-Health Guide next year. As we continue our inclusive support of pre-PA students and alumni, we are grateful for their enthusiastic collaboration. Throughout the past year, we surveyed current pre-PA students and a snapshot of their feedback is provided below.

“Regardless of the feedback, [the Pre-Health Guide] is amazing and I am so grateful for your, and everyone else at HPAC's, hard work on bringing this into fruition. It means so much that you care deeply about supporting every kind of student. I can see the ways in which HPAC will continue to grow to be inclusive!”

“I do feel like the PPAAC community and HPAC are moving in the right direction to better support pre-PA students!”

“I am very grateful that HPAC is taking this first time to determine what more Cornell can do for pre-PA students.”

[The Pre-Health Guide] looks so wonderful and will undoubtedly be a huge help to all pre-PA students at Cornell! Thank you so much for putting this together, it's such a big step for Cornell!

“I'm so excited that students will be able to use [the Pre-Health Guide] as a "one-stop shop" resource. I especially love the specific modules that explain each step of the application process and that there are opportunities for advisors to guide them and follow-up with students' progress. This will ensure that students don't feel alone or unconfident in this process.”

**Feedback gathered and used with permission.*

The following feedback was gathered throughout the 2022-2023 academic year regarding advising appointments, comprehensive advising appointments, and the MMI Simulation in Summer '23.

““

The advisor was incredibly knowledgeable and helpful. She was on time, answered so many questions with detail and expertise. One thing I always thought Cornell was lacking was premed support, specifically counseling wise. This new HPAC really fulfills the need I had, so I am excited for this change.

””

““

Far more intuitive and streamlined. The appointments were easier to access, and there were far more options to choose from date/time-wise. An all-around improvement in the system of scheduling these sorts of meetings, especially for people who have jobs or fuller schedules.

””

““

The appointment went very well. The advisor gave me a lot of useful feedback... I am glad that [the advisor] took the time to go over some of my experience descriptions, and the feedback was very helpful.

””

““

I feel like I got my questions explained and have a plan going forward. The advisor was able to provide very helpful stats that I didn't know of before

””

““

I had all my questions answered, the new HPAC situation was explained very well, and I came away feeling less anxious about my situation.

””

““

I have a much better understanding of how to write the activity descriptions and my personal statement.

””

““

It was very informative. All my questions were answered in detail and helped me decide what I was going to do going forward.

””

““

It was so helpful. [The advisor] really helped me think about how to weave the different parts of my application together to tell a story that accurately represents me.

””

**Feedback gathered and used with permission.*

“ I found the feedback from the interviewers to be really encouraging and insightful. I feel like I walked away from the sessions today with a full page of notes on how I could improve my responses moving forward. ”

“ It was super nice having an interview practice with someone that does not know me, can honestly give feedback, and has seen a lot of interview answers! ”

“ I liked the different types of the questions asked, the variety really gave me a good insight into what I should review for MMI ”

“ I enjoyed being challenged on the spot with an ethical dilemma specific to medicine. It helped me feel more confident afterwards and I left feeling like I could have a meaningful conversation on the topics discussed throughout. ”

“ It was an incredible experience. [The advisor] was warm, receptive, and helpful in answering my specific questions and guiding me through the next few months as I prepare to apply. ”

“ It was really helpful in running through sample prompts as well as receiving detailed feedback about my responses/parts that I could improve. I feel that this Simulation MMI has gently set the tone for what to expect in future interviews. ”

“ Kind, helpful, and understanding hosts; clear, easy, and comprehensible format; and although an hour seemed daunting, the time passed perfectly. ”

“ I liked how the interviewers gave me feedback both on what I did well, what I could improve on, and alternatives/additions I could have mentioned in my answer. This was very helpful feedback for me. ”

“ It was very helpful to hear feedback on my interview answers, and it's something that I wouldn't be able to get just practicing on my own. ”

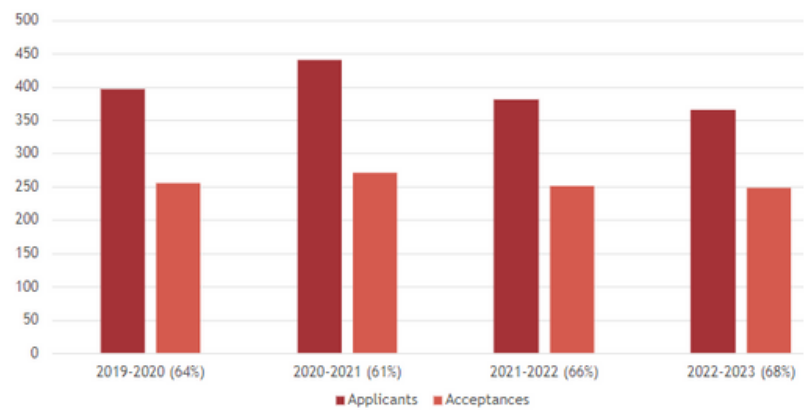
**Feedback gathered and used with permission.*

ADMISSIONS SNAPSHOT

This year, we provide a simple snapshot of some admissions and applicant information for medical school. The diagrams to the right depict Admissions data for historical AMCAS (U.S. MD) acceptance rates and data on gap/bridge years for applicants.

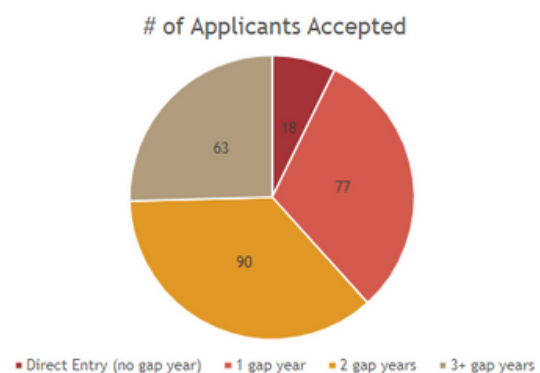
In future years, we hope to provide deeper analysis across a variety of different health professional schools that enhances our HPAC advising approach. Also new this year, we shifted to providing Letter Packets for applicants to medical, dental, and podiatry school. This shift has enabled us to dedicated resources to advising rather than writing committee letters. The new cover letters consisted of a brief introduction to HPAC, context of Cornell education, and a list of letter writers supporting the applicant.

Admissions Data: Historical AMCAS (U.S.-MD) Acceptance Rates



Historical AMCAS Acceptance Rates

Admissions Data: 2022-2023 AMCAS Application Cycle; Gap/ Bridge Years



22-23 ACMAS Application Cycle; Gap/Bridge Years



PHPLs with HPAC Team

A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR

What a year it has been for HPAC! I am so honored and privileged to be the Director of Health Professions Advising and, reflecting on this past year, I am filled with joy and pride as I look at everything HPAC has accomplished. The HPAC team has grown together into a highly efficient and collaborative unit that provides robust pre-health advising to our students and alumni. We have successfully adapted a new advising philosophy, focused on helping students discover and build upon their strengths and identify their niche in an increasingly diverse spectrum of health professions, and have been able to provide many programs and implement new initiatives.

Our successful transition from the Health Careers Evaluation Committee (HCEC) and the corresponding committee letter to the Cornell Letter Packet has afforded us the time and resources to provide comprehensive application coaching and a series of workshops and events, including the opportunity to provide over 100 Cornellians a simulation Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI) experience.



Students practicing suturing

We have strengthened partnerships across the University through the Health Careers Advising Network (HCAN) and the newly established Faculty Advisory Board. The HCAN community has been instrumental in creating a division of advising resources, so students and advisors better understand who to go to for what needs. HPAC continues to provide professional development opportunities for HCAN through medical school admissions deans and professional association representatives. The Faculty Advisor Board has provided me with guidance on HPAC priorities and assisted in developing “best practices” for letter writers that we will be launching in a Canvas course later this year.

As we continue to enhance services and support, I look ahead to the next year and beyond with much optimism for what we will be able to accomplish and provide for our pre-health students. We will be growing our team with a new assistant director of advising to continue to expand our services. We will also be launching the Pre-Health Guide, a universally designed Canvas course that will serve as a resource for students beginning their pre-health experience at Cornell all the way through their application to medical or other health professional school. We will be piloting an alumni mentorship program and will increase interactions with our many alumni working as healthcare professionals. We are hosting our Ivy Pre-Health Advising colleagues at Weill Cornell, for our first in-person meeting since pre-Covid to network and learn together and the HPAC team will be presenting at the National Association of Advisor for the Health professions (NAAHP).

It continues to be my vision to lead our team to being a world-class, pre-health advising office, one that is looked on by peer institutions as an exemplary model and that provides our students with exceptional support and services.



Rachael Perry
Director, Health Professions Advising Center
