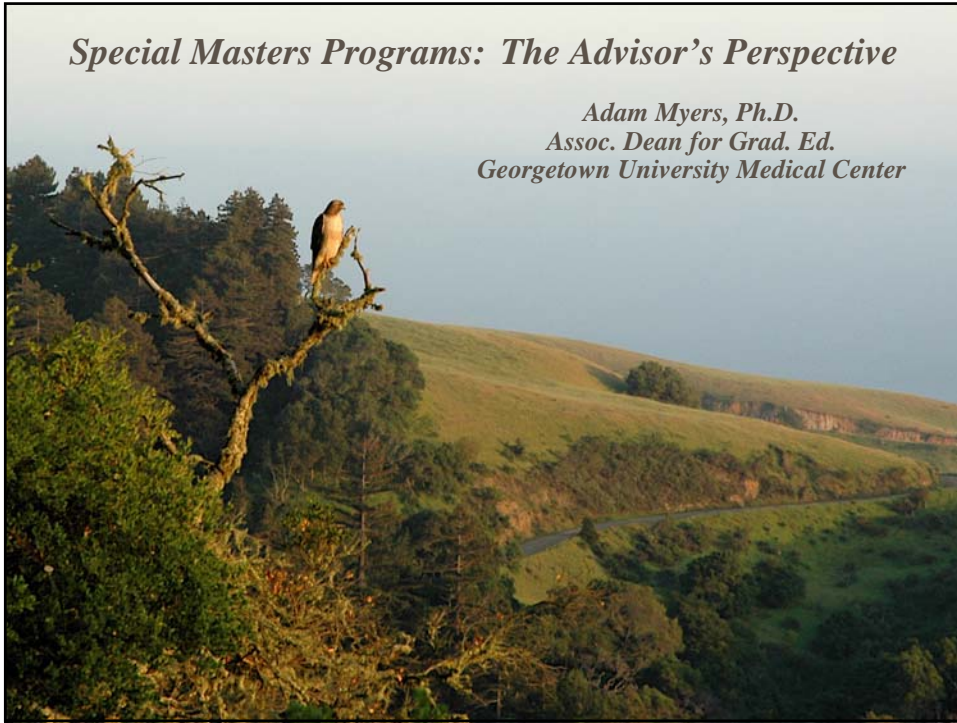


Special Masters Programs: The Advisor's Perspective

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What are “Special” Masters Programs?

- Programs specifically for medical school applicants with all the prerequisites
- Most are *degree-granting* MS programs in biomedical sciences
- 1-2 year curriculum, generally non-thesis
- Medical courses or equivalent, to allow students to demonstrate aptitude for medical school
- Best suited for students with all the usual qualifications, but weaker GPA

Credentials of MD and SMP Students

US MD Matriculants, 2005

- Science GPA of 3.56
- Total GPA of 3.63
- MCAT of 30

Georgetown SMP, 2006

- Science GPA of 3.15
- Total GPA of 3.31
- MCAT of 30

SMP students are, or should be:

- Students of high ability
- Often high achievers in other areas
- Hard workers with some risk tolerance

Examples of Special Masters Programs

- Special Master's Program, Georgetown University
- IMS Program, Drexel University
- Medical Sciences Program, Boston University
- M.S. in Physiology, Univ. of Cincinnati
- MA in Med Sci, Loyola Univ. of Chicago

(See AAMC website for more listings)

Curriculum of the Georgetown SMP

August - December Semester

- Microscopic Anatomy
- Embryology
- Fundamentals of Medical Immunology & Microbiology
- Cell and Molecular Physiology
- Biomedical Career Pathways

January - June Semester

- Human Physiology
- Human Endocrinology
- Neuroscience Enrichment
- Introduction to Neuroscience
- Human Nutrition & Health

June Summer Session

- Physiology Library Research

Advantages/Disadvantages vis-à-vis Post-Bacc Enhancement Programs

- Degrees are applicable to other pathways
- High risk/high reward
- Less flexibility, but clearer recognition
- Graduate and medical vs. undergraduate courses
- Exposure to medical school environment
- Strong advising, support and education for medical school applications??

Choosing a Special Masters Program

- Degree vs. certificate
- 1 year or 2 years? (tuition implications)
- Graduate vs. medical courses
- Conditions of medical classes
- Academic atmosphere and student-faculty interactions
- Strong advising, support and education for medical school applications
- Admissions history to broad spectrum of medical schools (including the Program's school)

Special Masters Programs Outcomes (the Georgetown experience)

- Most students are accepted to medical schools
- Graduates excel in medical school; gain excellent residency placements
- Graduates who don't go to medical school do well in other arenas
- *Empowerment*



Who is competitive for Admission to a Special Masters Program?

- GPA requirement for most programs is 3.0
- MCAT requirement varies; usually 27+
- Applicants must have all prerequisite courses
- Applicants should have strong clinical and volunteer experiences
- Applicants should be ready and eager to fully apply themselves to a very rigorous program



Further information on this topic:

ADVISING UNSUCCESSFUL MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS

Mariella Mecozzi, Adam Myers, and Consuelo López Springfield
in the next issue of the Advisor

or visit us tomorrow at Meet the Deans

Our thanks to the WAAHP and WGSA