So You Think You Want to Be an Ophthalmologist....

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UTHSC
Department of Ophthalmology
Assumptions

• You have already discovered that Ophthalmology is the best subspecialty ever!
• You are considering applying for a residency program in ophthalmology.
• So, here’s what I tell the resident applications about the preparation, application, and interview process.
Match

• Last year…
  • 654 rank lists submitted for 459 positions nationwide
  • UTHSC received 359 applications, interviewed 60, matched 4
  • Average USMLE Step 1 = 235 (avg. unmatched = 212)
  • 92% US Seniors matched
  • 5% and 3% US Grads and IMGs matched
In Med School

- Good grades – Most successful applicants are in the top 1/3rd of class. AOA a factor.
- Electives/research *before* applying is important.
- Third year rotation grades thought to be a decent predictor of success in residency.
- Letters are key (2 from ophthalmologists).
- High USMLE score very important.
Applications

- CAS/early match.
- Completed in early fall (September).
- Average applications = 50 (risen drastically since the advent of electronic applications).
- Let’s talk about the personal statement….
  - Personal – tell us something unique/interesting, special about you. Have LOTS of people read it and give you input.
  - PLEASE don’t tell us why ophthalmology is the best specialty ever.
Choices....

• Talk to folks in the field (the more the merrier...).
• Talk to residents and senior medical students who have gone through the process
• Talk to yourself about your goals and objectives.
Before You Start

• **Create a map -- Know yourself**
  • Learning style
    – Didactic
    – Socratic
    – Modeling
    – “Hands off” vs. “Hands on”
  • Professional needs
    – Fellowship vs. comprehensive
  • Financial needs
    – Cost of living
    – Moonlighting
  • Personal needs
    – Spouse, family, emotional, or environmental issues
    – Adrenaline “junkie”/multi-tasker/chaos versus need for serenity/simplicity/elegance/order
When You Get There

• The Plan -- Know the program
  • Teaching styles
  • Professional demands
    • Leader or follower?
    • Teacher and learner?
    • Pathfinder or path follower?
    • Change versus stability?
  • Financial possibilities
    • Have to do a fellowship?
      – VAMC is critical for comprehensive ophthalmologist
  • Personal considerations
    • Personality and emotional issues of faculty compatibility
Goals and Objectives of the Match

- **YOU -- Become an ophthalmologist**
  - Personal and professional gratification
  - Highly skilled surgery
  - Lifestyle issues
  - Remuneration

- **US -- Produce competent ophthalmologists**
  - Fulfilling third leg of our mission as an academic institution
  - Bring honor to our institution
  - Institutional development
  - Perpetuate excellence in our profession
Goals and Objectives

- YOU -- Learn as much as possible about the strengths and weaknesses of program
  - Establish rank order
- US -- Learn as much as possible about each candidate’s strengths and weaknesses
  - Establish rank order
Goals and Objectives

- **YOU** -- Promote your strengths to the interviewers
  - Achieving high rank

- **US** -- Promote our strengths to the prospective residents
  - Attract the most qualified residents
Find Out About the Program

- Accreditation status
  - Program Director
  - Last review
  - Status?
  - Next review
    - 5 years = five stars!
    - 4 years = very good
    - 3 years = some problems
    - Less than that = buyer beware
- Current with requirements?
The Faculty
Top Ten Clinical Clinical Programs in US
The Clinical Faculty

- Barrett G. Haik, M.D., F.A.C.S.
  Hamilton Professor and Chair
  Ophthalmic Oncology, Orbital Disease, and Oculoplastic Surgery
- Natalie C. Kerr, M.D., F.A.C.S.
  Hiatt Professor
  Residency Program Director
  Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
- Edward Chaum, M.D., Ph.D.
  Plough Professor of Retinal Diseases
  Medical and Surgical Diseases of the Retina
- Mary E. Smith, M.P.H., R.D.M.S.
  Instructor and Director of Special Projects
  Diagnostic Ultrasonography
- R. Christopher Walton, M.D., M.H.A.
  Associate Professor
  Assistant Dean for Graduate Medical Education
  Uveitis and Ocular Inflammatory Disease
- Robert W. Enzenauer, M.D.
  Professor
  Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
- Thomas J. O’Donnell, M.D.
  Assistant Professor
  Neuro-Ophthalmology and Low Vision
- Mary Ellen Hoehn, M.D.
  Assistant Professor
  Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
- William R. Morris, M.D.
  Associate Professor
  Comprehensive Ophthalmology, Ophthalmic Pathology
- James C. Fleming, M.D., F.A.C.S.
  Vice Chair, Clinical Affairs
  Lewis Professor
  Orbital Disease and Oculoplastic Surgery
- Peter A. Netland, M.D., Ph.D.
  Vice Chair, Academic Affairs
  Siegal Professor
  Glaucoma
- Ralph S. Hamilton, M.D.
  Professor
  Anterior Segment Surgery
- Zeynel Karcioglu, M.D.
  Professor
  Oculoplastics, Ophthalmic Oncology, and Pathology
- Alessandro Iannaccone, M.D.
  Assistant Professor
  Hereditary Retinal Disease, Visual Electrophysiology
- Matthew W. Wilson, M.D., F.A.C.S.
  Associate Professor
  Ophthalmic Oncology, Orbital Disease, and Oculoplastic Surgery
New Clinical Faculty

- James C. Hart, MD
  - Anterior segment surgery/Director, Surgical Skills Transfer Center
- Elliott Kanner, MD
  - Glaucoma
- Andrea Partal, MD
  - Cornea
The Facilities
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday/Thursday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>7:00 - Morning Report</td>
<td>5:30 – Neuro-ophthalmology conference</td>
<td>5:30 – Cornea Conference (T)</td>
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<td>7:30 - Grand Rounds</td>
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<td>8:45 - Orbit &amp; Plastics</td>
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<td>10:00 - Pathology/CPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>7:00 - Morning Report</td>
<td>5:45 - Journal Club</td>
<td>6:00 - Memphis Eye Society Meeting (W)</td>
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<td>7:30 - Fluorescein</td>
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<td>8:45 - Uveitis</td>
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<td>10:00 – Pediatrics</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>7:00 - Morning Report</td>
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<td>5:30 - Retina</td>
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<td>7:30 - Grand Rounds</td>
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<td>8:45 - Glaucoma</td>
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<td>9:45 – Cornea</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>7:00 - Morning Report</td>
<td>5:30 - Grand Rounds: Methodist Healthcare</td>
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<td>7:30 – Morbidity Conference</td>
<td>University Hospital</td>
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<td>8:45 - Optics/Anterior Segment Surgery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and Low Vision</td>
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<td>10:00 – Retinal Degeneration</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>7:00 - Morning Report</td>
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<td>7:30 - Wetlab</td>
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Visiting Professors/Special Events

- **July**
  - 1st year lecture series

- **October/November**
  - Academy (3rd years)
  - Ometepec (3rd year)

- **December**
  - Annual Update and I. Lee Arnold, M.D. Distinguished Visiting Professor

- **January**
  - St. Jude Retinoblastoma Conference

- **February**
  - Basic Science Review

- **March**
  - Sir Harold Ridley Distinguished Visiting Professorship

- **April**
  - Residents as Teachers (2nd years)

- **May**
  - Memphis Eye Convention
  - George M. Kambara, M.D. Distinguished Visiting Professorship

- **June**
  - Residents’ Day
Rotations

1\textsuperscript{st} year
- Medplex (2 rotations)
- VAMC
- Specialty (Hamilton)

2\textsuperscript{nd} year
- VAMC
- Peds
- Specialty
Rotations

- 3rd year
  - VAMC
  - Methodist
  - Medplex
Our Culture

- Opportunity
- Flexibility
- Accountability
- Reliability
Preparing For the Interview

• Read your application as objectively as possible (and NO typos!). Come up with at least 10 questions that you really don’t want to be asked, and sit in a room until you figure out a “good” way to answer them
• Practice or ask for assistance if you know that interviewing is a real problem for you
• Know your research/experience
• Strike a balance between uptight and slacker
• Dress appropriately
• Be nice to everyone
• Be honest
You Already Have a Good Start!

- UT track record
- Reputation nationally
- Supportive environment

- Good Luck!