UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Betsy Close (partner Larissa Gardner)

College: Arts & Sciences Department: BCMB

Faculty Mentor: Dr. John Koontz

PROJECT TITLE: "Pre-Health Students' Guide to Success: A Student's Perspective"

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: John Koontz, Faculty Mentor

Date: 4/22/03

Comments (Optional):

Elizabeth Close & Larissa Gardner
Senior Honors Project
Spring 2003

Pre-Health Students' Guide to Success: A Student's Perspective

Many students come to the University as "pre-med", but often have multiple unanswered questions regarding where to find information about the entire application process. Betsy Close and Larissa Gardner have created a website as a senior Honor Project to assist future classes at the University of Tennessee in attaining their goal of becoming a health professional. The information provided is designed to supplement the basic material provided by the Arts & Sciences Advising Center. It is not meant to be the sole source of information, but rather a compilation of resources that helps the student to explore this growing field on their own.

Information for the project was gathered in various manners. Our most important sources were our own personal experiences and experiences of our peers moving through the University system in attaining our personal goals of becoming health professionals. We reviewed currently available information in the forms of websites and booklets. Surveys were administered to students in Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED, the pre-health honor society on campus) to investigate what areas students desired to see covered in the website. The same survey was sent via e-mail to each student listed as pre-health with the Arts & Sciences advising center with the help of Ms. Mary Anne Hoskins (associate director). Student profile questionnaires were given to senior students who responded to this e-mail. This allowed us to include biographical information.

The career paths covered in this project are dentistry, medicine, optometry, and pharmacy. The topics investigated within each career path are: pre-requisites, recommended courses, clinical experiences, volunteer work, extracurricular activities, research, standardized tests, the pre-professional file, centralized application services, and the application process, interviewing, student profiles for University of Tennessee students accepted by professional schools, and helpful resources. Available information was compiled into a user-friendly format and reflects the perspective of a student who had already been through the experience.

Several problems were encountered in the design of the project. Working with HTML was a learning experience for both of us. The aesthetics of the website design itself had to be considered. We sought assistance and input regarding the layout, color scheme, and menu design. Since we are graduating, another difficulty is future maintenance of the website. Possible solutions include designation of an honors student or an AED officer to periodically update the information. Future placement of the site was a concern since the site of origin, http://web.utk.edu/~lgardne3/health, will be deleted soon after graduation. Dr. Golden (associate director of the honors program) helped us secure a new domain http://honors.utk.edu/prehealth. Another concern is publicity of the site so that it will be utilized by as many students as possible. We have contacted several groups and organizations on campus to see if they are interested in having a link to our website for their students. Both AED and College Scholars have agreed to create this link. The Arts & Sciences Advising Center, the academic head of the Athletic Department, head of the Biomedical Engineering Department, and the Agriculture campus have been contacted. We are also planning to contact a writer for the student newspaper the *Daily Beacon* who is a current honors student about possibly writing an article about our website.

A permanent copy of the information presented on the website is available on compact disc. Many students and faculty have provided positive feedback regarding this project. We sincerely hope this website will prove helpful in disseminating pre-health information widely and effectively and help make University of Tennessee students successful in their efforts.