

Interview at St. Louis University – 1/30/01

The admissions committee only conducts interviews on Tuesdays, so I called about two weeks in advance to schedule. I went down the night before and left an hour early so that I could be sure and find the school and a place to park. There were about 15-20 interviewees, some of whom interviewed in the morning and some who – like myself – interviewed in the afternoon. Everyone took a tour of the medical school at 11:15. There were students of all ages (one guy was 36 and half were over 24) and from all over the country. Be sure to not let this, or the fact that nobody knows Wartburg College, intimidate you. You are as qualified, if not more than they are, despite the university or job they come from.

The facilities at SLU are really nice. The medical school is just one large maze of a building, and it is connected to the school's hospital via an underground tunnel. They are very focused on the clinical aspects of medicine and do not have the focus or facilities for research that schools such as Iowa do. They really preach about class unity. Overall, I thought the facilities were top notch and everyone seemed really friendly. After the tour, there was a lunch with lots of med students of varying years which was nice, but at that point I was beginning to focus more on my interview.

The interview process at SLU is much different from that at Iowa. Your interview is open-file, which means that the interviewer has everything from your AMCAS to your transcripts and recommendations in front of them. I interviewed with a neuroradiologist who was really nice. We spent the first twenty minutes or so talking about my transcripts and experiences at school. He was very interested in my business minor and whether or not I had completed very many classes in the arts (a well-rounded liberal arts education will be a major help here). As we progressed through the interview, he began to really probe me with more psychological questions, such as:

- If you could change three things about yourself, what would they be and why?
- What makes you angry and how do you deal with it?
- Name one obstacle you have had to overcome.

After I had answered each of these questions, he pointed out their significance to me. I don't think that these questions were important so much for their answers as much as they were important for the way in which I answered them. The key thing is to be confident in who you are and to be honest, because they will probably be able to tell if you are giving them a lot of meaningless hyperbole. At the end of the interview, I was allowed to ask questions (ASK QUESTIONS!!!), and we talked about those for about thirty minutes.

Overall, the interview was one hour and fifteen minutes, which is longer than normal for them I am sure. My interviewer was not overly interested in any of the research I had done as the people at Iowa were. This seemed to be a theme for this school, so don't go in there trying to wow them with your prolific research experience. Just be yourself and answer the questions the best you can. This interview is especially important because the doctor you interview with will then write a report on you and present it to the admissions committee. I have nothing but great things to say about this place. It may not be in the best part of town, but the facilities and people are great. The tuition is a little high, but if you are looking to be an excellent clinical doctor, this may be a great place to go.