Is your long-range goal to become a Doctor, Dentist, Pharmacist, Veterinarian or enter other professions in the health sciences that require an advanced degree? Are you obtaining a bachelor’s degree at Cal Poly and working on prerequisite coursework to apply to professional school? If so, the following information may be helpful to you.

Career Counseling and Resources:

If you are considering a career in healthcare, but have some uncertainty or need more information, we encourage you to talk with a career counselor. A career counselor can help you assess your skills, interests and values and see if they match the profession that you are considering. Career Center staff can also assist you in obtaining more information about careers in healthcare that may be of interest to you. Following are some resources for general exploration that can help you learn about these professions:

- **Career Resource Library**: The Career Resource Library is found in the Cal Poly Pomona Career Center. There are books on almost any profession, divided by college.

- **California Career Zone**: This website is designed to help students explore professions they are interested in. [http://www.cacareerzone.org/](http://www.cacareerzone.org/)

- **ONET**: This website is also provides useful information about careers of interest. [http://online.onetcenter.org](http://online.onetcenter.org)

- **Informational Interviews**: Requesting an informational interview with a healthcare professional can give you helpful insight into the realities of their career.

Pre-Professional Advising

Once you decide that you want to pursue a healthcare career that requires an advanced degree, your first stop should be pre-professional advisement. Visit the Pre-Professional Advising webpage ([http://www.cpp.edu/~preprofessional/officehours.shtml](http://www.cpp.edu/~preprofessional/officehours.shtml)) on the Cal Poly Pomona Website. There is a wealth of information here for students considering a professional degree in the health sciences. Dr. John Chan, PhD is the pre-professional advisor for the College of Science. His Office hours and contact information can be found on the pre-professional advising webpage. You are encouraged to meet with Dr. Chan, and consult with your academic advisor if you are considering preparation for a career in healthcare professions.
Pre-requisites:

Each program and each institution has its own prerequisites. Some common admission prerequisites for health care professional degrees include the following:

1 year of English
1 year of general (inorganic) chemistry with laboratory
1 year of organic chemistry with laboratory
1 year of general biology with laboratory
1 year of physics with laboratory

Highly recommended courses include Biochemistry, Genetics, Cell Molecular Biology and Physiology

More specific information for prerequisites and recommended courses for each program can be found on the Cal Poly Pre-Professional Advisement Webpage and from the admissions information for the university that you are considering attending for your professional degree.

Admissions Information:

Many professional programs direct applicants to a unified application service like AMCAS (see below) for medical school, AADSAS for Dental School, PHARMCAS for pharmacy schools, or VMCAS for Veterinary School. Additionally, the Pre-Professional Advisement office in the College of Science can assist you in creating an admissions application file that includes certified faculty letters of reference and other required admissions information. Following is general admissions information for those interested Medical, Dental, Pharmaceutical, Veterinarian and Physician’s Assistant degrees.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

Tests needed: MCAT

Online MCAT registration is available on the AAMC website:
http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm

Association: American Medical Association
(http://www.ama-assn.org/)

Application Service:
For AMCAS medical schools, one can apply through the website: http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/start.htm

DENTAL SCHOOL

Tests needed: DAT

The Dental Admission Test (DAT)
Suite 1846
211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2678

Apply Online: http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/dat/index.asp

Association: American Dental Education Association (ADEA)
http://www.adea.org/

Application Service:
For AADSAS dental schools (Associated American Dental Schools Application Service), apply through the website:
http://www.aeda.org/Pages/default.aspx

California Medical Schools:
UC Davis, UC Irvine, UCLA, UCSD, UCSF, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, USC--Keck School of Medicine, Western University of the Health Sciences, Stanford

California Dental Schools:
UCSF School of Dentistry, UCLA, USC, Loma Linda University School of Dentistry, University of the Pacific School of Dentistry
PHARMACY SCHOOL

Tests needed: PCAT
Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT), October or February, required by most schools. Online application information can be found at http://www.pcatweb.info

Association:
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
426 Prince Street, Alexandria
VA 22314-2841
703-739-2330
http://www.aacp.org/

Application Service:
Pharmacy College Application Service (PHARMCAS), http://www.pharmcas.org

California Pharmacy Schools:
UCSF, UCSD, University of the Pacific, Loma Linda University, USC, Western University of the Health Sciences

PHYSICIAN’S ASSISTANT PROGRAMS

Tests: GRE or MCAT: required by certain schools
Links: http://www.physicianassistant.ca.gov/

PA schools in California:
Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California
Riverside County Regional Medical Center/
Riverside Community College
Samuel Merritt College
Stanford University School of Medicine
University of California--Davis
Western University

VETERINARY SCHOOL

Tests needed:
GRE or MCAT or (VCAT)
(consult admissions requirements of prospective Veterinary Schools.)
GRE information can be found at:
http://www.ets.org/gre

Online MCAT registration is available on the AAMC website: http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm

(VCAT it no longer offered, (since April 2003) but recent scores are accepted at some colleges)
Animal Experience Requirements: Minimum 300 hours veterinary-related experience through internship and/or externship

Association:
American Veterinary Medical Association
(http://www.avma.org/)
Test Preparation Programs:
Enrolling in test preparation courses for the GRE, MCAT, DAT, PCAT and other graduate entrance tests can help you achieve a higher score to enhance your candidacy for admission to the program of your choice. Kaplan and Princeton Review are well known test preparation educators. Kaplan offers test preparation courses on the campus of Cal Poly Pomona at the Career Center. Schedules, costs and registration information can be obtained at the following Websites:

Kaplan:  http://www.kaplan.com/TestPreparation/

Application Timelines:
Students should begin the application process for graduate school no later than the summer one year prior to the fall enrollment period that they are targeting (see Graduate School hand-out at Career Center or Peterson’s.com, at  www.petersons.com – Planning Timeline ) It is suggested that you create a calendar or timeline, well in advance, with all the important deadlines related to the specific programs that you may be applying for, providing adequate time for test score results, faculty references, personal statements, onsite visits and other details. Career Counselors at the Cal Poly Pomona Career Center can assist you with planning your application process, in cooperation with the Pre-Professional Advising Center in the College of Science, and will review your personal statement upon request.

Looking Ahead:
It’s never too soon to learn all you can about the road ahead as you complete your undergraduate preparation for an advanced degree in the health sciences. For example, becoming a doctor takes 11 to 16 years. You’ll need to complete four to five years of pre-med preparation, another four years of medical school, and three to seven years of residency. It doesn’t end there, though. As long as you’re practicing, you must continue to learn long after med school is over to stay abreast of current research, new trends, and breakthrough treatments and medications. Prospective students are encouraged to count the cost of the career path they are considering, and make an informed commitment to their profession with a realistic assessment of what is required to succeed. The potential personal, professional and financial rewards of a successful career in healthcare are significant, and are generally deemed well worth the effort by those who pursue careers in this field. Additionally, healthcare professionals typically make a satisfying contribution to their community and to the welfare of others.

Other Useful Links and Resources:

- Petersons: Leading graduate school search provider  www.petersons.com
- U.S. News and World Report: Ranks graduate programs nationwide  www.usnews.com/sections/education
- SDN the Student Doctor Network: Information and resources for medical, dental, pharmacy, veterinary and other healthcare applicants, students and professionals. “…an independent resource to the pre-health and health professional student community.” www.studentdoctor.net
- MSAR (Medical School Admissions Requirements): A comprehensive guide to medical school admissions requirements and procedures for North American medical schools. Purchase on American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) website www.aamc.org or Amazon.com
- USC School of Pharmacy Admissions page: Provides an example of pre-requisites and admissions requirements for Pharmacy School.  http://www.usc.edu/schools/pharmacy/pharmd/admission/requirements.html
- UCLA School of Dentistry Admissions page: Provides an example of pre-requisites and admissions requirements for Dental School.  http://uclascod.dent.ucla.edu/admissions/index.asp?id=345
- UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine Admissions Requirements:  http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/about.cfm