

# Admissions Policy Statement

The primary goal of The University of New Mexico School of Medicine is to produce competent, humanistic physicians capable of pursuing a complete spectrum of medical careers. In order to achieve this goal, the School of Medicine finds that having a diverse student body is essential. The educational program strives to imbue the medical student with a deep concern for continuing intellectual growth that will lead to a lifelong commitment to self-education. To these ends, the admissions process attempts to evaluate those qualities in applicants that are fundamental to the making of a physician of excellence.

In evaluating applicants for admission to medical school, four basic criteria are taken into consideration: the applicant's academic and personal records, Medical College Admission Test scores, premedical recommendations, and impressions gained from personal interviews with members of the Committee on Admissions.

An important non-performance factor in considering students for admission to The University of New Mexico School of Medicine is the residency status of the student. As a state-supported institution in a state where health care needs are great, the medical school feels strongly that most of the accepted applicants should be residents of New Mexico. The school acknowledges a secondary obligation to students in western states without medical schools through participation in the Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education (WICHE) program and will continue to accept a few of these students each year. The school accepts a few out-of-state residents with exceptional qualifications. Foreign nationals with U.S. permanent resident visas who otherwise meet the requirements for admission are also considered.

It is recognized that New Mexico has unique problems in the delivery of health care, particularly in the distribution of health care personnel. The medical school feels that it has an obligation to help meet the physician manpower needs of the state by selection of students who are likely to train in specialty areas of current need and to remain in or return to the areas in New Mexico needing physicians. Cognizance is also taken of attributes of applicants that indicate a strong motivation to practice in medically underserved areas of the state. Other applicant attributes that are viewed favorably by the committee include regional bilingual skills, computer skills, demonstrated research capabilities, independent learning skills, excellence in educational achievement, demonstrated leadership abilities and evidence of social commitment.

A diverse student body is essential to the School of Medicine's educational mission. Diversity benefits all students by creating a dynamic, productive and positive learning environment, and promoting cross-cultural and cross-racial understanding. In addition to benefits in the classroom, diversity in the medical-school setting also helps to improve access to health care for vulnerable populations.<sup>1</sup> Diversity helps the School of Medicine produce individuals who are able to be effective clinicians in New Mexico's multi-cultural environment.

In seeking diversity, the School of Medicine considers a wide range of factors when evaluating applicants for admissions, including but not limited to: demonstrated intellectual capacity, outstanding academic achievement, work experiences, life experiences, living or working in a

rural community, academic and personal motivation, commitment to public service, the extent to which the applicant has overcome educational and/or economic obstacles, and other indices that the applicant can succeed in medical studies and make a significant contribution to the School of Medicine community and the State of New Mexico. All applications receive individualized consideration and are reviewed competitively in one pool.

The School of Medicine is committed to racial and ethnic diversity with special reference to the inclusion of students from groups that are underrepresented in medicine in New Mexico. Having a critical mass of such students is essential for the educational benefits of diversity and for training doctors to practice in New Mexico's medically underserved communities.

The School of Medicine periodically reviews this Admissions Policy Statement to consider, among other issues, whether its diversity policy remains responsive to the needs of the School and the State of New Mexico.

Approved by School of Medicine Committee on Admissions 6/25/2004

Approved by School of Medicine Committee of Chairs 7/14/2004

Approved by School of Medicine faculty 8/26/2004

---

1 The School of Medicine takes note of the increasing body of scholarly research on the benefits of student body diversity in medical education. See Dean K. Whitla et al., Educational Benefits of Diversity in Medical School: A Survey of Students, 78 *Academic Med.* 460 (May 2003) (84% of medical students surveyed from two medical schools reported that diversity enhanced classroom discussions; 78% reported that a diverse student body was a positive element in their educational experience); Earnest Moy & Barbara A. Bartman, Physician Race and Care of Minority and Medically Indigent Patients, 273 *JAMA* 1515 (1995) (minority patients were over four times more likely to receive care from non-white physicians than were Caucasian patients); Miriam Komaromy et al., The Role of Black and Hispanic Physicians in Providing Health Care for Underserved Populations, 334 *New Eng. J. Med.* 1305 (1996) (Black and Hispanic physicians cared for more Black, Hispanic, uninsured and Medicaid patients as compared with other physicians); Lisa Cooper-Patrick et al., Race, Gender, and Partnership in the Patient-Physician Relationship, 282 *JAMA* 583, 588 (1999) ("ethnic differences between physicians and patients are often barriers to partnership and effective communication."), Somnath Saha, et al., Patient-Physician Racial Concordance and the Perceived Quality and Use of Health Care, 159 *ARCH Intern. Med.* 997 (1999) ("Although black physicians account for less than 5% of the total U.S. physician workforce, they served as regular health care providers for 23% of the black individuals in [the study] sample."); Stephen N. Keith et al., Effects of Affirmative Action in Medical Schools, 313 *New Eng. J. Med.* 1519 (1985) (minority graduates practiced in federally designated medically underserved areas at almost twice the proportion of nonminority graduates).

The University of New Mexico is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity institution. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this material is available in alternative formats upon request.