

Pre-med

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titative analysis. An experimental essay-writing section recently has been added at some schools as well.

Pre-meds can undergo months of intense preparation for the test. Private courses designed exclusively for the MCAT can cost in the neighborhood of \$300. The University's Academic Learning Services offers a course for \$60.

Reactions to the MCAT run from panic to obsessive determination beforehand, with wild relief the usual feeling after the ordeal.

"It's not easy; it's an experience and I'm glad I went through it and I'm glad it's over... I wouldn't want to take one again," said Lonergan of the MCAT he took last spring.

"Some people literally got sick during the test. It's one of the most stressful things you do as a pre-med without a doubt," said James Manwill, a second-year medical student at OHSU.

By now attrition has turned a mass of some 500 pre-med students into a group of 75 to 100 students who will actually apply to medical schools.

Much of the attrition is due to students finding interests in other majors or careers. This has usually accounted for 50 percent of the attrition, Strange said.

Two services exist on campus to help students cope with the pre-med life. The Pre-Health Sciences Center offers peer and faculty advising to those planning to go into physical therapy, chiropractic, and nursing.

The Asklepiads organization is a pre-med student club of sorts. Before joining the organization, students are required to have at least a 3.5 GPA, and to have completed one term of organic chemistry. Prospective members also write a short personal essay before joining.

The group pools together its resources to do things individuals would have a difficult

time with, such as collecting information on the country's medical schools, and coordinating activities to give members experience in the health field.

Applying to a medical school becomes another endurance test in itself. This process begins shortly after the MCAT, and can occupy a student's entire senior year. The American Medical College Application Service acts as a clearinghouse, issuing a standardized application accepted by most medical schools.

The schools then send back their own applications to the students they are interested in interviewing. At this point a student can end up paying hundreds of dollars in application fees before they reach the crucial interviewing process, which itself often entails travel costs.

In the last five years, between 50 and 60 percent of the Univer-

sity medical school applicants have been accepted. One of the main problems a student faces once admitted into medical school is the exorbitant cost. At OHSU the successful applicant can expect to pay an estimated \$10,000 in tuition, books, and supplies, with the out-of-state rate much higher.

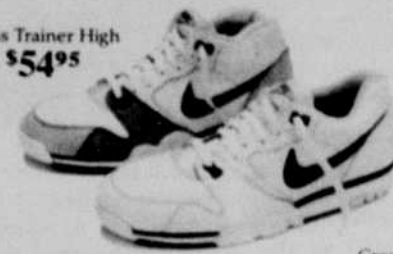
And then students experience the legendary pressure of medical school, which involves marathon four-hour tests and a ritual of near-constant study.

"The pace picks up so incredibly — instead of being in school 12 hours a week, you're in school 38 hours a week," Manwill said. Lecture notes are printed and given to students beforehand because there is simply no time to take notes on your own.

"The drive to study all the time comes from the desire to finish... the biggest drive is knowing that you will have to take care of patients, and you need to know all you can," Manwill said.

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