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The Crow's Nest John R. Hale

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Almost every week I was reminded of how much I have learned about life from working with Liberal Studies students.

I was attending a national conference on legal and philosophical writings about suicide – a gloomy topic for a gloomy time of year. One of the books that was discussed was *The Sufferings of Young Werther* written in 1774 by the German novelist and philosopher Johann von Goethe. Werther is 21-year-old genius who feels every aspect of life with such intensity that half the people who know him find him wonderful, exciting company, while the other half think he is mad. Young Werther develops a hopeless passion for an even younger married woman named Charlotte – her husband is one of Werther's friends – and when he realizes his love is hopeless he shoots himself.

The novel is autobiographical. At 21, the author Goethe had immersed himself in hopeless love for a married woman named Charlotte. He considered suicide, but instead wrote the novel about young Werther to exorcise his own personal

demons. As one scholar at the conference said, holding up his copy of the book, "This is what Goethe did instead of shooting himself. He turned life into art."

More than two decades ago, I was introduced to the modern field called Expressive Therapies by a Liberal Studies student. The student had been the victim of a violent crime, and had been saved and returned to a happy life through therapy in which story-telling, dramatization and art were used to work through the feelings of horror and grief. Near the close of the transformation, the victim became a creator by crafting a model of the gun that had been used in the crime, and then burying it in a ceremony with the other members of the therapy group. From that moment, the student told me, memories of the terrible event seemed to lose their grip: life could go on. The student was now going to become an Expressive Therapist to share this new hope with others.

I recounted the story at the conference, as I have told it here. Those around me were amazed that such a branch of therapy existed, that it was operating all around us, and

that it empowered ordinary people – not geniuses – through art. And, as I said, I was reminded all over again how my own life and understanding have been enriched by the hundreds of Liberal Studies students whose goals and studies have introduced me to worlds of experience that I would otherwise never have encountered.

It's a bleak season, winter, but it always carries the hope for renewal and rebirth. Please accept my best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season, and a reviving return of spring in the coming months.





The Path to Medical School by Elizabeth Self

Program Title: Pre-Med with Emphasis on Private Practice

As many of you ambitious pre-med students know, the path to medical school is anything but easy. Between the classes, the MCAT, the

volunteering, and the research, does there seem to be time for anything else? How can you balance all these things and still have time for yourself? What exactly is everything that you need to do to get into medical school? Is there anyone who can help? I am here to help answer many of these questions.

I am a Senior Liberal Studies major, applying to medical school in May. I have been dedicating the past three years of college to getting into medical school, and am hoping that all my hard work will soon pay off! As the product of two doctors, medicine has always seemed like the natural thing for me to pursue. I, however, have to achieve my acceptance into medical school alone. At first, the idea of medical school seems so distant, and yet incredibly intimidating at the same time. It is hard to know what to do and when to do it.

First and foremost, medical school would like to see that you have stellar grades, especially in science classes. Straight As are preferable, but the occasional B is nothing to worry about. If you receive a C in a science class, it is strongly recommended that you retake the

class. If you find yourself making several Cs in science classes, maybe you should rethink your chances of getting into medical school. Remember, the schools you apply to will see **all** of your grades, even if you retake certain classes. In addition, it is not recommended to take science classes for Pass/Fail grades. Some admissions board may think you are trying to hide a much worse grade than you actually received.

After you are confident that you are making med school worthy grades, it is important to make sure you are involved on campus and performing lots of community service. Medical schools want to see the entire package. They want someone who can not only make the grades, but can lead the class. You can play a sport, volunteer at a hospital, join a club, or anything else that appeals to you. The important thing is to make sure you are involved! To run a successful medical practice, you not only need the valuable science knowledge, but you also need team work and business skills. You must be able to see patients plus hire and work with people who can schedule patients, run lab work, and handle finances. Being a leader is a big part of medicine. In addition, having a humanitarian heart is something the admissions boards will be looking for. You should not go into medicine unless you truly feel a call to help others.

Another important extracurricular that is becoming a standard is research. Medical schools understand that you like science, but how do you know that you want to be a doctor instead of a scien-

tific researcher? You need to be able to explain that you have done research and reflect on your experiences in research. It is very easy to become a part of a research team, especially at UofL, which is becoming internationally known for research. Log onto the UofL website, and type in "research." Browse through the different projects that various labs are performing. Email the primary investigators of projects that interest you and explain that you are an undergrad looking for research experience in the medical field. You will be surprised at the response. Many labs look for undergrad researchers just like you to help with small tasks. You can pick up some valuable research experience along the way and probably a good letter of recommendation (which you will be needing 3 of by the time you apply to med school!). It is also a chance to try to get published. This could set you apart from other applicants. Research is a good idea during the Summer, when you can focus without the distraction of school.

Once grades and extracurriculars are covered, it is time for the thing everyone fears the most: the MCAT. The UofL med school recommends studying 6 months ahead of time from the date you want to take the MCAT. There are lots of MCAT programs that are specially designed to help you succeed, such as Kaplan. **These programs only work if you put in the hours.** The assistant dean of admissions recommends 300 hours of studying before the test date.

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An Alumni's Perspective on His Independent Degree

by Glen Gittings

I originally came to UL thinking I was going to be an Engineer, and for multiple semesters I pursued that goal. But over the course of my first few semesters I began to realize that my mind seemed to flourish more in my Humanities courses. I soon learned that I truly loved Sociology and Psychology, but I didn't know what I wanted to do or which one to choose. Following the pattern of most college students, I changed my major, leaving Speed School behind. Over the next few semesters, I bounced through a few majors until I eventually I had a long talk with my A&S advisor focused on what I wanted to do when I graduated. Over the years I was able to rule out careers in Engineering, Medicine, Law, and Business, and slowly started thinking I would love to be connected to a

college campus.

That is when my advisor proposed two ideas: a career in Higher Education beginning with a Liberal Studies undergraduate degree. I knew I had finally hit the proverbial nail on the head with my career choice, I could now remain gainfully employed in a career field and stay connected to the vibrant energy and thirst for knowledge that drew me to a college campus. The Liberal Studies degree allowed me to utilize my years of Engineering courses and incorporate my love of Sociology and Psychology. With my career path chosen, I designed a Higher Education Administration program that prepared me for the next step of graduate school.

Upon graduation, I completed a Master's degree in Student Affairs

in Higher Education from Western Kentucky University. My higher education career has included stints in Alumni Relations, Development, and Admissions. In order to further my career goals, I am completing my Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration here at UL. With coursework now complete, my dissertation topic is focused on the impact that departmental and university programs have on doctoral student completion. The Liberal Studies degree not only allowed me to utilize all my coursework, but provided the flexibility to set my path toward my desired career.

Glenn Gittings '00

Coordinator of Admissions & Alumni Outreach



The Path to Medical School *continued from previous page...*

In addition, it is best to only take the MCAT one time. Do not go into the exam as if it were the SAT or ACT. Med schools will see all of your scores and will take into consideration any poor scores that you received.

You can purchase old MCATs from AMCAS and many other sources. This grade is more important than many people think. Once your application is validated, you are ranked by MCAT score. The 2008 UofL med school class had an average of 29 for their

MCAT score. If you really want to secure your chances, it is best to get above the average or at least the average.

So now that you know what it takes to get into medical school, it should be no problem getting in, right? Remember, stay motivated! The competition for medical school becomes fiercer each year. Just look for the light at the end of the tunnel and keep your eye on the prize. If you have any questions or need some support, try joining a medical fraternity such

as Phi Delta Epsilon or AED. These groups are full of pre-med students and are a great source of old tests, social support, and volunteer opportunities. They also host guest speakers and offer chances to shadow doctors. If you have any additional questions, remember that UofL has pre-med advisors ready to answer questions at any time. You can ask your own advisor for contact information for these individuals. Best of luck and study hard!

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We hope you have a restful, restorative, and happy break!

Housekeeping:

- If you haven't yet completed a **Student Opinion Survey**, please do so before the end of term. We need every LBST major to weigh in on the university, A&S, and our program. Your voice, your opinions, your cooperation is vital to the well being of Liberal Studies!
- Students **emailing Dr. Hale** should do so from their louisville.edu account. Emails from non-university accounts may be blocked.
- After **December 11**, Dr. Hale will be out of the office until after the winter break. After **December 18**, I'll be out of the office until January 5th.
- **May 2009 degree application** is online, through ULINK, **November 15, 2008– January 27, 2009**.

“Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her, and is found by those who seek her. She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her. One who rises early to seek her will have no difficulty, for she will be found sitting at the gate. To fix one’s thought on her is perfect understanding, and one who is vigilant on her account will soon be free from care, because she goes about seeking those worthy of her, and she graciously appears to them in their paths, and meets them in every thought.”

Wisdom of Solomon 6:6-12

