

Preparing Your Autobiography

The purpose of writing an autobiography is to provide the Health Sciences Committee with additional information so that we can write a relevant letter of recommendation that is specifically about you and your accomplishments. Since the purpose of the recommendation letter is to provide medical (and other health professional) school admission committees an idea of your personal qualities - compassion, maturity, motivation, integrity – we want you to tell us as much about yourself (within reason) as you can. Think about it as a sketch detailing your educational background, professional and personal goals, academic achievements, extracurricular activities and any other information that would be helpful for someone who is writing about you. The following are suggested components for the autobiography:

I. Who You Are

- Your full Name, social security number, local address and phone number, permanent parental address and phone number, major(s), minor(s), cumulative GPA and your “BCPM” (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math) GPA.

II. Your Background

- General family background, number of siblings, parents’ occupations, etc.
- Educational background, high school you attended, academic honors in high school and college, prizes, awards or accomplishments. If you are particularly proud of any such award, explain your reasons.
- If college courses were taken somewhere other than Xavier, include a copy of your transcript from the other school(s).
- Extracurricular activities and interests outside of school: sports, clubs, hobbies. Emphasize leadership roles you have filled and contributions you have made. Tell us **why** you participated.
- Summer and academic year employment, number of hours worked per week, responsibilities and what you learned from your experience. If such employment helped finance your education, estimate the percentage of your education that you financed personally.
- Any special circumstances that may have affected your academic progress or success (illness, employment, etc.)

III. Your Goals

- Motivation or interest in the profession: What factors went into your decision to pursue this particular field?
- Contact with your chosen profession, volunteer work, employment, relatives, friends, etc.
- Why do think that you are well-suited for this career?
- Alternative career plans: What will you do if you are not able to pursue your chosen career?

Your autobiography should be well written, grammatically correct, in essay form and word processed. Don't forget to save your autobiography and to keep a paper copy for yourself.

On the date that Autobiographies are due, turn in to the Coordinator of Pre-Professional Health Advising: **1. A paper copy of your autobiography, a small recent photograph and your signed Buckley Amendment Waiver Form (found in your *Preparing for the Health Professions* booklet or on the table in 105 Albers, and** **2. An electronic copy of your autobiography sent via e-mail to the Coordinator at rettigk@xu.edu (in Microsoft Word, if possible).** You might be contacted by the Coordinator for any clarification that may be necessary. She might even ask you to rewrite or add portions as needed, so that the Health Sciences Committee can begin working on your letter.

*In addition to this handout, please consult the chapter on “Letters of Recommendation and Your Autobiography” in the advising booklet, **Preparing for the Health Professions**, available from the Coordinator of Pre-Professional Health Advising in Albers 105B.*