

UNIVERSITY OF CA, SAN DIEGO (UCSD)

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 30 minutes

OF INTERVIEWERS: One faculty member, one pharmacy student

TYPE OF INTERVIEW: Two-on-One

LOCATION: La Jolla (Southern CA)

INTERVIEW AGENDA

To get a better idea of UCSD's interview process, read Sarah's in-depth testimonial.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Why pharmacy?
- 2) What are challenges pharmacists face today? Negative aspects?
- 3) How do you balance your extracurricular activities with academics?
- 4) What other schools did you apply to? UCSF?
- 5) Why didn't you go into Medicine? (hardest)
- 6) What do you like to do for fun?

ESSAY QUESTION

What was your favorite non-science class in college?

OVERALL IMPRESSION

I had a 12pm interview and left around 3pm. A little disorganized (especially the writing portion) but the UCSD interview was, by far, the most relaxed and non-stressful out of my four. I had this interview after I got accepted into USC, so the pressure was off. I went in with a positive attitude because even if the interview tanked, I would still have USC. Frankly, when I drove down to UCSD, I didn't think that I would choose UCSD over USC for several reasons. First, USC really impressed me at the interview with the networking emphasis. I believe in the networking concept and thought that I would fit in perfectly at USC. Secondly, UCSD pharmacy program has 40% integration with med students. Thirdly, UCSD focuses more on research than retail. At the end of the day, however, I started shifting my rankings of schools.

The interview absolutely felt more like a conversation than a formal interview. They asked me the initial "Why pharmacy?" question. I started talking about my EC activities, which acted as a springboard for the rest of the interview. My faculty interviewer didn't read from a set of questions but, instead, asked more detailed follow-up questions. I felt myself at ease in answering each question. They had my secondary application with them so they asked questions off that document (i.e. EC involvement). At the interview, it felt as though they were recruiting me versus USC, where I had to sell myself. Laughing and smiling are usually strong indicators of a good interview.

Since UCSD has the smallest class size of 60, they can be picky in whom they invite to interview and accept (3.7 average GPA). If you're invited to interview, you should be proud to have gotten that far. Once you reach the interview stage, it's fair

game. Everyone there is smart. Everyone has great EC activities. Everyone has charming personalities. How do the schools know how to separate competitive applicants? It comes down to the interview. The schools know that you can succeed academically at their school; at the interview, they have their chance to see if you're a "freak" (i.e. study 24/7, no social skills) and, most importantly, to determine whether you would make a good fit with their particular school and program.

If you want to go into retail, however, I'd recommend choosing USC because USC is so established and has strong connections with retail chains like Sav-On and Walgreens. UCSD is a relatively young school and isn't located near the retail chains. However, the location of UCSD is right in the heart of biotech companies. If you like research, you will have plenty of opportunities to get your hands wet during pharmacy school. UCSD also touts great faculty with many coming from UCSF. They even have professors keep an eye out for pharmacy students who have potential to become future leaders and professors in the field.

I really do believe that UCSD will become one of the best pharmacy schools in California in a couple of years. The integration of cutting edge technology and pharmaceutical research has the potential for a great pharmacy program. As a new school, I liked how the school focused on maintaining their prestige. If I had not been accepted into UCSF, then I might have actually chosen UCSD over USC...but who knows? =)