

UNIVERSITY OF CA, SAN FRANCISCO (UCSF)

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 40 minutes

OF INTERVIEWERS: One faculty member, one pharmacy student

TYPE OF INTERVIEW: Two-on-One

LOCATION: San Francisco (Northern CA)

INTERVIEW AGENDA

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

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Are you a grad student? (Ummm, no...haha)
- 2) What got you interested in pharmacy?
- 3) What are some challenges that pharmacists face?
- 4) What roles do you see pharmacists taking on in the future?
- 5) Why should we pick you over other qualified applicants?
- 6) Looking at your application, we can see that you're very involved with extracurricular activities. Do you think you can handle balancing EC activities with pharmacy school?
- 7) You're in a group and you think the group is heading in the wrong direction, how would you voice your opinion? And can you give an example where you handled a similar situation? (the "situational" question)
- 8) Are you involved in research?
- 9) Which pathway are you most interested in?
- 10) How can you contribute to this pathway given your prior experience? (hardest)
- 11) What do you think about the new Medicare changes? Have you heard about the Bush health care policy? (Luckily, I did).
- 12) Anything else you would like to tell us before we end this interview?

MY QUESTIONS

- 1) What kind of community service programs do pharmacy students get involved with? Do most students have time to get involved during their first year?
- 2) Every school has its own niche, what would be the biggest draw for me to attend UCSF over UCSD or USC? (it was an honest question)

ESSAY QUESTION

There are 3 prompt choices, pick one to write on.

- a. There is a potential dam site that can provide electricity to millions of people. But it is in a pristine location with endemic species. Do you leave the location alone or go in for the resources?
- b. Writing songs, painting – these forms are considered art. When you digitally manipulate images and songs, is that still considered art?
- c. All humans have unique characteristics and traits that set us apart. Yet all of us are created equal. Explain the contradiction. (I chose this one even though I was taking conservation biology at the time.)

OVERALL IMPRESSION

This was definitely my hardest interview. I felt nervous because this is the school that everyone wants to get into. I actually “studied” for this interview. When interviewing at UCSF, you need to know the three different pathways and which one you would be most interested in pursuing. Not only should you know the pathways, you should stay up to date with current events. Sarah didn’t get any questions about Medicare but I did. Thankfully, I read up on the different propositions that were on the ballot (Prop 78 vs. Prop 79), changes to Medicare (Part D), and started reading on a daily basis the New York Times “Health Section” which highlighted Bush’s initiative about health care reform (noted in his State of the Union address). It’s okay to now know the answers to their question but you need to be semi-knowledgeable about the current big issues that the field faces (the transition towards pharmaceutical care and changes to Medicare).

While UCSF may be the number one pharmacy school in the nation, rankings shouldn’t be everything when deciding which school to choose. Four years is a long time and sometimes the practicality of the situation takes precedence. I have UCLA friends who turned down UCSF for UCSD and USC because of the geographic location. Distance from family, friends, BF/GF can be a big deal and should factor into your decision. I think all the CA schools are great and that each has their own unique characteristics (UCSF- clinical, UCSD- research, USC- retail, Touro- 2 year clerkship, Western- lots of biochem reqs, UOP- three years, etc). You’ll be making the right decision no matter the school. Make the most of your time in pharmacy school. Like UCLA, you’ll learn to love the people and school.

Ever since I became pre-pharmacy, I set my goals high and aimed for UCSF. I’m interested in the Pharmaceutical Health Policy and Management pathway (the two other pathways are Pharmaceutical Care- most popular and Pharmaceutical Sciences- least popular) and no other school offered this program. If UCSF wasn’t number one yet still had this program, I would go to the school that fit me best. For my interview, I luckily got placed in a large room with the two interviewers. (Sarah had curtains separating her from other interviewees). We all sat in desks and faced each other in a circle. Sometimes you go into an interview and know that you nailed it. You feel great. Everyone is smiling. I didn’t have that feeling at UCSF (haha) but I don’t think anyone did. It’s okay because the interview isn’t everything. UCSF likes the well-rounded people. They look for nice genuine people with good grades, solid pharmacy experience, and dedicated community service. Leadership is always a big plus. Aim for those criteria and you’ll have a good shot of getting into any pharmacy school.

While the school doesn’t have its own pharmacy building, it is the oldest pharmacy school in California (older than USC). World-class faculty. Surrounded by bright students (future peers). They are the only school that offers the 3 different pathways (USC has those dual degree programs). While my interview didn’t go spectacular, I felt very comfortable at the school and the people were friendly. You want a school that constantly re-evaluates the program to match the needs of the students. As for city life, it’s hard to beat San Francisco. (But you can’t go wrong with any of the top CA pharmacy schools). I’m from the Bay Area so San Francisco had my heart from the beginning, though I must admit that I will miss my flip-flops and the gorgeous sun. Cheers!