# Get Ready to Apply Workshop #1

Continuing Education
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

# What you'll need for this presentation

- PDF of Power Point Slides
- Example of successful AMCAS application
- Example of successful non-AMCAS application
- Pre-Application Google Sheet (we'll do this during the presentation)

Tip: Keep a running list of topics you'd like to discuss at your next individual pre-health advising session.

# Topics in Workshop 1

1. Principles for success as you prepare for application season
2. Examples of successful applications
3. Getting your Pre-Application Spreadsheet started
4. How to participate in our Application Writing Support process
5. Thinking ahead to a few future actions to take

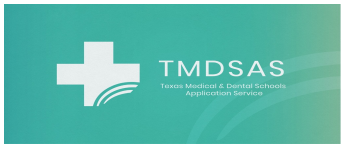
# Principles for Success

## Logistics to prepare for application year

- Strategically select an application year in which you will be a strong applicant
  - MD applicants: Use your first-time applicant status wisely.
- Prepare thoroughly, in advance, without rushing for that application season
- Follow optimal timing for each step in the application process

# Examples of Successful Applications

Centralized Application Services:



# Examples of Successful Applications

**Sections to pay attention to:**

- Childhood information .
- List all US and Canadian colleges/universities that have any form of academic record for you (even if all Ws)
- List all college-level coursework, including college credit earned in high school
- Other Impactful Experiences
- Misdemeanors, felonies, institutional action
- Coursework history (enter this yourself; don't pay for the app service to slowly do it for you)
- Activity entries:
  - AMCAS has max of 15 entries
  - ADSAS has max # of entries per category
  - No limit for the other common apps but avoid having too many entries.
- Do NOT need test scores in order to submit application

# Examples of Successful Applications

## Other Impactful Experiences/"Disadvantaged Status"

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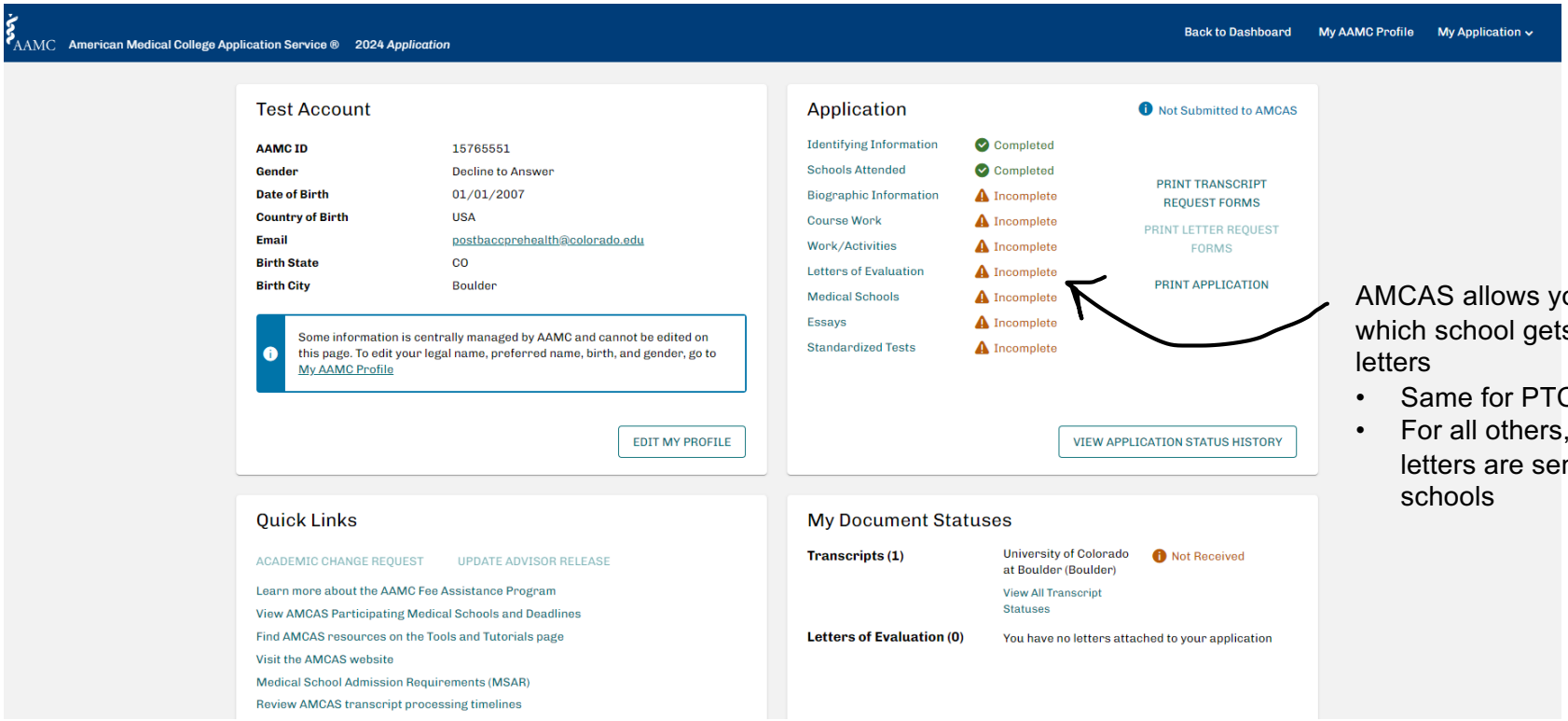
**From the AAMC:**

"This question is intended for those applicants who have had impactful life experiences and who have faced or overcome challenges in a variety of areas such as family background, financial background, community setting, education, religion, or other life experiences. The experiences described can be from any point in an applicant's lifetime and do not need to be related to the field of medicine or health care."

**Examples of the types of life experiences that are useful to mention here:**

- **Family Background** (first-generation college student, serving as a caretaker of a family member, loss of a family member)
- **Financial Background** (e.g., low-income family, worked to support family growing up, work-study to pay for college, participation in federal or state financial support (e.g., Medicaid, food stamps, unemployment compensation), Pell Grant recipient)
- **Your Childhood Community** (e.g., rural area, food scarcity, high poverty or crime rate, lack of access to medical care).
- **Educational Experiences** (e.g., limited educational opportunities, non-traditional student, limited access to advisors or mentors).
- **Other General Life Circumstances** that were beyond your control and impacted your life and/or presented barriers (e.g., religion, illness, traumatic events).

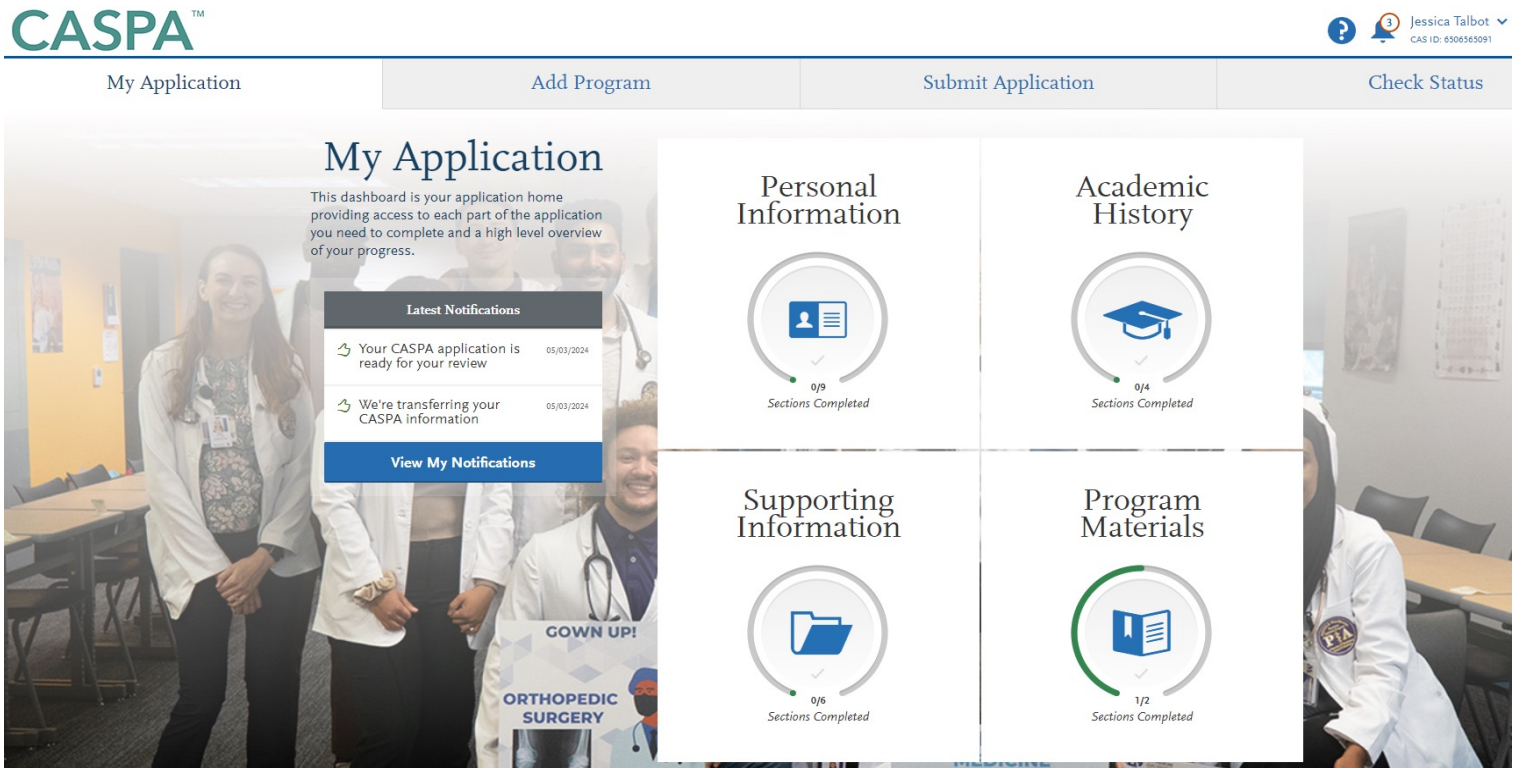
# AMCAS




AMCAS allows you to specify which school gets which letters

- Same for PTCAS
- For all others, all of your letters are sent to all schools

# All other common applications (except TMDSAS)



# Overview of the Application Writing Support Process

# Application Writing Support Process

## What is it?

A structured process that:

- Ensures that each of our advisees is well-versed in best practices in the professional school application process
- Provides you with a clear set of tasks and deadlines to prepare you to navigate the application process successfully
- Gives you access to 1:1 Application Writing Support sessions (i.e., working directly with wording in written drafts):
  - Personal statement
  - Activity descriptions
  - Disclosure statements
  - Representative set of secondary application essays

**Application Writing Support**

- Advisor reviews written draft in advance
- Focus is on reviewing your writing and discussing content

**vs.**

**Pre-Health Advising**

- All other pre-health advising topics
- Brainstorming ideas for your personal statement counts as “pre-health advising”

# Application Writing Support Process

## What does it include?

1) **Three mandatory group meetings**
   - Today's session: Getting Started
   - Get Ready to Apply #2: Personal Statements
   - Get Ready to Apply #3: Activity Entries
2) **Video series and required tasks to complete**
   - Each video presents best practices for a key element of the application preparation process
   - Required follow-up tasks allow us to confirm engagement and that you took in the key points while also – most importantly! – preparing you for the application and interview process.

3) **Comprehensive Pre-Application Google Sheet**
   - Spreadsheets that keep you organized and give the advisors a centralized place to find your drafts
   - Links to resources for each element of the pre-application process

4) **Dates and deadlines to keep you on track**
   - Initial set of tasks to complete to register for the Application Writing Support Process
   - Videos to watch prior to Workshops #2 and #3
   - Complete the rest of your Pre-Application Google Sheet over Winter Break

# Application Writing Support Process

## How does it work?

1. **To register, complete initial set of tasks by November 1.**
   Once complete, send us the link to your Pre-Application Google Sheet.

2. **Next, to become eligible for scheduling 1:1 Application Writing Support advising sessions, complete the remaining sections of the Pre-Application Google Sheet.**
   - Three waves of Application Writing Support advising sessions. Earlier submissions qualify for more waves.
   - Each student can complete one session within each wave that they qualify for.
   - Deadlines are firm.
   - We are not able to accommodate requests for application reviews outside of these sessions.

| | Deadline (by 8:00 p.m., MT) | Application Writing Support appointment window |
|---|---|---|
| **Wave 1** | January 12 | January 5 through February 27 |
| **Wave 2** | February 9 | March 1 through April 30 |
| **Wave 3** | March 9 | May 1 and beyond |

These dates are examples from the 2025-2026 academic year

# Application Writing Support Process

## How to schedule

- Schedule a pre-health advising appointment as usual in Buff Portal Advising or call our office at 303-492-5148 for scheduling assistance

- In the “Desired Outcome” box, tell us which type of draft you want to focus on:
  - Personal statement
  - Full set of activity entries
  - Representative set of ~5 secondary essays
  - We can discuss disclosure statements in addition to any of the other types of drafts

- To prepare for your session, your advisor will review the relevant drafts in advance.
  - Ensure that your current drafts are in your Pre-Application Google Sheet (or that the relevant page of the Google Sheet has a link to the current draft.) That’s where we’ll go to review your writing in advance.
  - If you do not tell us to read in advance, that’s okay – but we’ll need to take some of your appointment time to read it and think about it.

# Application Writing Support Process

## Jess and Elisa take different approaches to personal statement coaching

- Choose one of us to work with on your personal statement and stay consistent with that advisor.

- In the fall, meet with that advisor for a personal statement brainstorming session. This is considered a regular pre-health advising appointment. (We aren't looking at a draft yet, so it isn't "writing support.")

- When you are ready for feedback/coaching on your personal statement:
  - **Jess** provides synchronous feedback during Application Writing Support appointment times.
  - **Elisa** provides asynchronous feedback, in writing.
    - For personal statement feedback from Elisa, book an advising appointment for that purpose, but you won't actually meet at that time. She'll use that time to review your draft and prepare written feedback for you.

# Getting Started on Your Pre-Application Spreadsheet

# Pre-Application Spreadsheet

**Where to find it:**

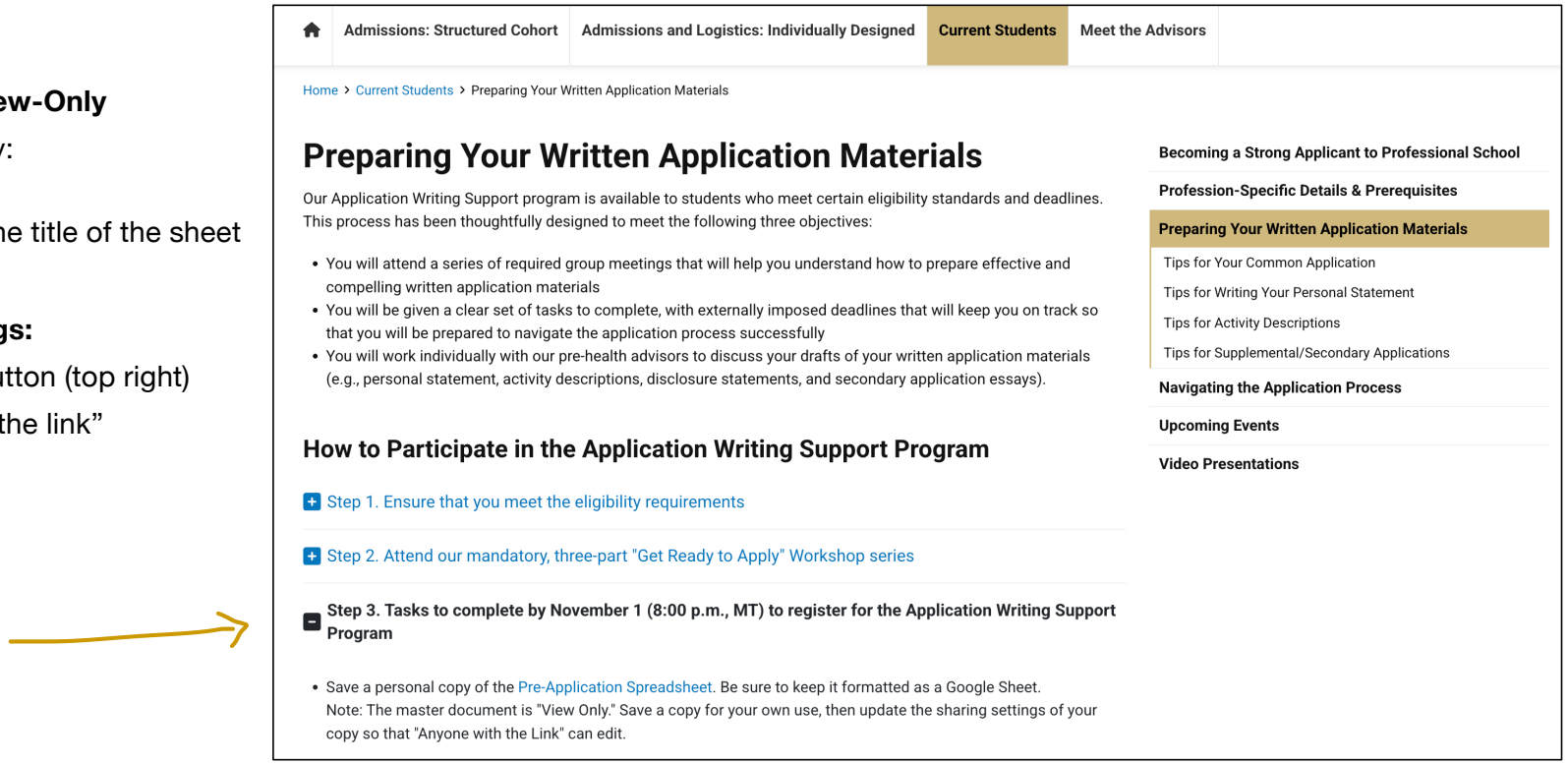
- **Go to colorado.edu/ceprehealth > Current Students > Preparing your Written Application Materials**
- Expand Step 3

**The master copy is View-Only**

- Save your own copy:
  File > Make a Copy
- Add your name to the title of the sheet

**Update sharing settings:**

- Click the “Share” button (top right)
- Allow “anyone with the link”
  to be an editor



# Pre-Application Spreadsheet

1. Eligibility Checklist
2. What to do this year to get ready to apply
   - Complete the Fall and Winter Break checklists
   - Review Spring
   - Summer: personalize this section
3. Assignments & Deadlines for App Writing Support tab
4. Import GPA calcs from your Pre-Health Advising Notes sheet
5. LOR assortment

# Thinking Ahead:
## Planning for Application Year

# Planning for Application Year

**Prepare thoroughly for interviews**

- Even if you are a gregarious “people person”
- Even if you have a lot of prior interview experience in other contexts

**Continue to strengthen your candidacy throughout your application year**

- Complete any remaining prerequisites (presumably NOT the ones tested on the MCAT/DAT/OAT)
- Engage in meaningful gap year activities
  - Build upon your strengths
  - Shore up gaps in your preparation

**Why these help:**

- New/updated activities give you something to talk about at interviews and give you a reason to send in an update letter
- If you have to reapply, you’ll be an even stronger applicant next time

# Interview Preparation

## Videos and Group Meetings in the Spring Semester

- [ ] **Watch the following videos:**
  - [ ] Interview Prep, Part 1: How to Prepare
  - [ ] Interview Prep, Part 2: Logistical Considerations and Tips for Success
  - [ ] Tips for Responding to Ethical Dilemmas
  - [ ] Multiple Mini Interviews
  - [ ] Intro to Casper and PREview

- [ ] **Attend each of the following spring Pre-Health Post-Bacc group meetings (meeting details are posted on our website):**
  - [ ] Spring Practice Session #1: Traditional interview questions ***Be sure to attend this! It's *required* for cohort students.**
  - [ ] Spring Practice Session #2: MMIs
  - [ ] Spring practice Session #3: Casper and PREview

# Interview Preparation

After watching the videos and participating in the spring practice sessions …

**As interview season gets underway, complete 1-2 mock interviews with the pre-health advisors**

- Kindly wait until September or later (unless you get an earlier interview offer) so that we can get our fall semester students started.
- Schedule as a regular pre-health advising appointment but send an email to the advisor in advance to let us know to prepare for a mock interview.

# Plan Ahead for Meaningful Gap Year Activities

**Guidelines for selecting activities for your gap year:**

- Protect your financial health
- Allow time to rest
- **Always, always** stay engaged in a clinical patient-interaction role (4+ h/wk, paid or volunteer)

# Plan Ahead for Meaningful Gap Year Activities

**Guidelines for selecting activities for your gap year:**

- Are there areas of preparation that you haven't yet had time to address?
- Or that you've been reluctant to try? (Run into the discomfort!)

**By getting involved in new, meaningful, and relevant activities in your gap year:**

- You can talk about them at interviews
- You can write about them in update letters
- If you have to re-apply in the following year, they will improve the strength of your candidacy

**The most relevant jobs/activities are ones that include:**

- Clinical patient care, clinical patient care, clinical patient care!
- Directly helping other people (in any capacity)
    - Especially valued: Engaging directly with people in underserved populations
        - Examples include: AmeriCorps, Fulbright Scholarship
    - Teaching/training position or other formal leadership role
- MD applicants especially: Intellectual engagement in hypothesis-driven research

# Next Steps

If you haven't yet attended Workshops #2 and #3 in the Get Ready to Apply series, do so:

| What | Why | When |
|---|---|---|
| Get Ready to Apply #2 | Personal Statements | Thursday, December 18, 5:00 to 7:00 pm, MT |
| Get Ready to Apply #3 | Activity descriptions,<br>Secondary application essays | Monday, December 22, 5:00 to 7:00 pm, MT |

# Next Steps

## Videos to watch

- Links provided in your Pre-Application Spreadsheet

Watch these before Workshop #2!

| Topic | Video Links |
|---|---|
| Common Application | • Transcripts and Course Entry (runtime: 8 minutes)<br>• How Schools Receive Test Scores (runtime: 3 minutes)<br>• When to List LOR Authors in Common Application (runtime: 10 minutes) |
| Letters of Recommendation | • How to Ask for Strong Letters of Recommendation (runtime: 18 minutes)<br>• Handouts:<br>  • Guidelines for Writing Compelling Letters of Recommendation<br>  • LORs: Confidential vs Non-Confidential Considerations |
| Personal Statement | • Writing Exercise -- be sure to complete this before Workshop 2 (runtime: 16 minutes)<br>• Tips for Writing a Compelling Personal Statement (runtime: 19 minutes)<br>• Handout: Personal Statement Writing Tips |
| Activity Descriptions | • Activity Descriptions (runtime: 23 minutes)<br>• Handouts:<br>  • Tips for Writing Application Experience Descriptions<br>  • PA Applicants: Tips for CASPA Experience Descriptions |
| Secondary Application Essays | • Secondary Essays (runtime: 17 minutes) |
| Other Application Essays | • Other Essays (runtime: 16 minutes) |

# Deadlines for Application Writing Support Process

To get started:

**CHECKLIST OF TASKS TO COMPLETE**

- ☐ **Watch *all* of the videos listed below.**
- ☐ **Respond to *all* of the prompts listed in the charts below.**
- ☐ **Complete the following sections of this Pre-Application Spreadsheet:**
  - ☐ **Tabs 1, 2, and 3 in entirety**
  - ☐ **Activity History tab:** write an initial draft of at least two of your Activity Descriptions. MD applicants: At least one of the activities needs to be a "Most Meaningful" entry.
  - ☐ **On the Reflection Questions tab:** Write your answers to the first two prompts.
  - ☐ **Letters of Recommendation tab:** identify people at least two people whom you'll ask for a letter.
  - ☐ **School List tab:** Identify at least three schools you're interested in. At minimum, list the required assortment of LORs and any non-standard prerequisites they may have.

# Deadlines for Application Writing Support Process

Here are the remaining tasks to complete over Winter Break to finalize your Pre-App Spreadsheet:

**Additional Required Sections:**

- ☐ **Tab 4. Activity History:**
  Complete this page so that it includes all of the entries you plan to include on your professional school application.
  - MD applicants: Include a total of three "Most Meaningful" entries.
- ☐ **Tab 5. Reflection Questions:**
  Write out your answers to all of the remaining reflection questions. (Heads up: This takes time!)
- ☐ **Tab 8. Personal Statement:**
  Paste a link to a separate Google Doc that has your draft of your personal statement.
  - Update the sharing settings on the Google Doc so that "anyone with the link" can be an editor.
  - We expect this to be an early version, but it nonetheless should be a complete draft that follows the guidance in our "Tips for Writing a Compelling Personal Statement" video.
- ☐ **Tab 9. Application Disclosure Statements**
  - Answer both questions. (Write N/A if they don't apply to you.)