PCAT Preparation
March 29, 2011

I. Why is the PCAT important?

A. Standardized test
   1. Variance exists among the quality of education offered by different academic institutions. The PCAT provides a method for assessing the overall preparedness of each individual.

B. There is a correlation between the PCAT and the NAPLEX score.

C. Some pharmacy schools weigh the PCAT heavily towards admission.

II. What is the outline of the PCAT exam?

A. It is a 5 hour computer based test. No calculators or scratch paper are allowed. Each individual is given a white board to work out problems. Only the test proctor can erase the white board.

B. Essay #1(30 minutes): The test begins with an essay regarding problem solving.
   1. Often it concerns current events.
   2. You may want to structure the essay into 5 paragraphs (1-Introduction, 2,3,4-sustaining body (perhaps 2 pro and 1 con), 5-conclusion)
   3. The essay is typed not written. Make sure you can type well.
   4. The essay will be graded on problem solving skills and grammar.

C. Verbal Section (30 minutes, 48 questions - only 40 questions are graded)
   1. This section will focus on analogy (60%) and sentence completion (40%).
   2. Prepare by expanding your vocabulary and learning how to dissect words.

D. Biology Section (30 minutes, 48 questions - only grade 40)
   1. The composite of this section is General Biology (60%), Microbiology (20%), Anatomy / Physiology (20%).
E. Chemistry Section (30 minutes, 48 questions - only 40 are graded)
   1. The composite is General Chemistry (60%) and Organic Chemistry (40%)
   2. Most all of the Organic Chemistry material is covered in O-Chem I at WSU.
   3. Chem 3000 Quantitative Analysis is a very beneficial course.

F. After the Chemistry section there will be a break.

G. Essay #2 (30 minutes)
   1. Only one of the two essays will be graded.
   2. Essays are scored on a 1 to 5 scale. Seldom are they scored higher than 3.

H. Reading Comprehension (50 minutes, 48 questions - only 40 graded)
   1. Read the questions first.
   2. Highlight important facts in the paragraph. Perhaps color code highlighting.

I. Quantitative Ability (40 minutes, 48 questions - only 40 are graded)
   1. The composition is Basic Math (15%), Algebra (20%), Probability / Statistics (20%), Pre-Calculus (22%), Calculus (22%)
   2. Math completed through Calculus II provides optimum preparation.

III. How is the PCAT scored?
   A. Immediately after the exam you will be given a rough score without the contribution of the essay. Complete score usually takes 5 weeks to be sent back to the test taker.
   B. The raw score can range from 200 to 600, but the score that counts is the percent based upon a normalizing group (your performance compared to a control group).
   C. A composite (overall score) > 70 is desirable with scoring above 50% in each of the areas.
   D. Some applicants plan to take the test twice, using the first one as experience.
IV. What is the best way to prepare for the PCAT?

A. Complete all of the courses covered on the PCAT.

B. Take as many practice tests as possible (KAPLAN, Dr. Collins, Pearson View)

C. Review study guides from above sources.

D. Clear your schedule to allow for time to review.

E. Get a good night rest the night before.