

10 Tips for a Successful Wetzel Scholar Application

What is a Wetzel Scholar?

The Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (MAOPS), Missouri's affiliate to the American Osteopathic Association, annually awards the prestigious Wetzel Scholar designation to students of Missouri's colleges of osteopathic medicine who have completed a curriculum designed to develop leadership skills and knowledge of organized medicine.

Each year, students at Missouri's COMs can apply to become a Wetzel Scholar Candidate. If selected, candidates have one year to complete the requirements. Upon completion candidates achieve the Wetzel Scholar designation, along with a monetary scholarship to assist in educational expenses. Successful scholars may choose to continue in the program through medical school, completing a new set of requirements each year.

How do I enhance my chances of becoming a Wetzel Scholar candidate?

The selection process is extremely competitive, with 1-3 students selected annually. To enhance chances of selection, the MAOPS Leadership Development Committee (the MAOPS entity charged with administering the Wetzel Scholar Program) has provided the following tips:

1. Plan on practicing in Missouri! We know things can change, but you must convince us that you are highly likely to practice medicine in Missouri upon completion of residency.
2. Join your campus MAOPS chapter – no matter how much you participate in other important clubs on campus, membership in your MAOPS chapter shows support for the organization making a difference in Missouri and shows support of the state organization – both key indicators of a future leader.
3. Engage with your campus MAOPS chapter – Being a member is great but engaging and helping take the chapter to new heights is impressive. If your campus chapter leaders don't know you, well...that's not a good sign!
4. Make connections with MAOPS leadership PRIOR to the application window. Sometimes it's not how much you know, it's who you know. Networking and becoming known is helpful.
5. Know who the MAOPS members are within your campus faculty. Discuss your interest with them. It may be helpful come application time.
6. Begin the application process early. This doesn't mean it has to be turned in months in advance, but if the first time you think about it is two hours before its due...
7. Prepare for your interview. Select applicants will receive an opportunity to interview with MAOPS leadership. Prepare as you would for any interview. Remember, the questions you ask can be more impressive than the answers you give.
8. Maintain academic success but demonstrate well-roundedness. Grades are important to us, but we prefer well-rounded students who have additional responsibilities and can show success in those areas too.
9. Be professional in all your actions.
10. Consider joining a MAOPS committee or attending the annual convention. These are great ways to meet MAOPS leadership and network.

BONUS TIP: Plan on applying at least twice. Many applicants are not selected the first time they apply. Often the first time you apply is the first time leadership has heard your name. Apply, then if you don't get selected, get involved in some way and meet leaders. Introduce yourself. Then apply again the next year. Some successful applicants applied three times before being selected!