### Frequently Asked Questions: Extracurricular Experiences

#### Q. What opportunities are available on campus?

**A.** Please see the Extracurricular Opportunities section of the site.

#### Q. When should I start extracurricular experiences?

**A.** Since academics are the first priority of all pre-health students, the “best” time is really when you have a good handle on your academics and feel comfortable with the university’s schedule that you feel participating in extracurricular experiences will not have a negative impact on your academic success. Our advice for first-year and new transfer students is to utilize time during breaks and the summer to begin seeking out shadowing, volunteering, clinical, and other types of experiences.

#### Q. Are there some experiences that are better than others?

**A.** All students, regardless of their pre-health track, should begin searching for shadowing experiences as soon as they have decided to begin exploring careers in the health professions. For most first-year students, this happens during breaks and/or the summer between first and second year. Once decided, students should begin seeking out clinical, volunteer, and research experiences. The timing of these experiences may vary for each student, so please discuss with a pre-health advisor.

#### Q. Where should I look to find shadowing experience?

**A.** A good place to start with shadowing is with your family physician, dentist, optometrist, or other healthcare professional you or a member of your family may have seen growing up, depending on your pre-health track. If you do not have a personal connection to a healthcare provider, you can connect with students in the various pre-health student organizations on campus to obtain contact information for professionals they have shadowed, review the list of clinical experiences on our webpage, or last but not least, execute a quick online search of healthcare professionals in the area and begin reaching out to their offices, clinics, or human resource managers to inquire about shadowing opportunities. See a pre-health advisor for more information.

#### Q. What is the difference between a clinical experience and a shadowing experience?

**A.** Shadowing is strict observation of what is happening around you in the clinical setting (focus is broad). Clinical experiences are those in which you are performing specific assigned tasks (focus is narrow).

#### Q. What is the best path toward gaining research experience?

**A.** There are many avenues to gaining research experience at UCSB. A great resource to begin with is through the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) Grant and the Faculty Research Assistance Program (FRAP).

#### Q. Do I have to volunteer in a hospital or clinical setting?

**A.** While volunteering in a hospital or clinical setting may provide students with additional insight into their chosen fields, there is much to be gained by volunteering in one’s own community in non-medical/non-clinical settings. We encourage students to seek out volunteer and service opportunities that are meaningful to them and that allow them to work directly with populations from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds.