

## USC first-year PA Student Chase Hungerford

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|  | <p><b>Statistics:</b><br/>CSULB Alumnus<br/><b>Major:</b> Kinesthesiology/Exercise Medicine</p> <p><b>Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Helped in Physical Therapy clinic in high school</li><li>● Long Beach CCE program</li><li>● ER Medicine Program @ USC</li><li>● President of CSULB pre-PA club</li></ul> <p>Applied to 6 schools, got interviews at USC and Samuel Merritt<br/>(The average person applies to 12 schools)</p> <p>Went to the CAAPA Conference</p> |
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**Website:** [Aspiringphysicianassistant.blogspot.com](http://Aspiringphysicianassistant.blogspot.com)

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**Why go the PA route?:** Got bored working in the PT clinic, and decided being a physical therapist wasn't a career he wanted to do long term. His co-worker there introduced him to a physician assistant, who let Chase shadow him. Chase liked the flexibility of the career and diversity of the patients that PAs are able to care for. PAs are able to work *and* teach later on. Found that the PA career is good for forming a family.

**Tips on getting into PA school:** good time management skills, Spanish if living in CA (USC requires 2 semesters Spanish before matriculation).

**USC** focuses on community service.

### Types of courses taken at USC

- Topics in Medicine (different modules with a specialized topic)
  - Also have to take their respective clinical skills classes:
    - Ophthalmology
    - Neuroscience
    - etc.
- Cultural Competency (in medicinal respect) - learn to be aware of Chinese cupping therapy and other "exotic" treatments
- Spanish
- Professional Behavior/Practices

- Medical terminology in foreign languages
- Research → have to do a research paper and medical research

### Daily Life

- **Social life:** Spends every other weekend with his girlfriend.
- Otherwise, he studies and stays at school all day, Monday through Friday.
- Gets along well with classmates → “Your social life is your classroom”

### Demographics

- **Ethnicity:** 80% Caucasian, the rest are Hispanic, Asian, or African American
  - The PA profession is also mostly dominated by caucasians
- **Gender:** Female-dominated class. There are 11 males and the rest are female (good for single guys ;))
- **Age:** Youngest student: 21; Oldest student: 62
- **Majors:** Music, English, Fine arts, but the majority of students were science majors.

### Advice for Clinical Hours

- Don't do EMT work while you're going to school → It's not an easy job, you need to pay for a certification, long hours (12-hour shifts)
- Psychiatric Ward Assistant → not much training needed, but isn't a common occupation to come by
- Scribe
- Volunteer → gets your foot in the door for other clinical positions. You can eventually ask to get paid if you're chummy with administration, even if it's \$1/hr (PA schools don't look into how much you're paid, and you can claim it's paid clinical work). Volunteer work is also a good way to get connections/find PAs to shadow.
- Clinical research
- **Know the right people, get connected**
- Don't be afraid to take your time for getting clinical hours/shadowing experience

**Advice for finding a PA to shadow:** Got connected to a PA via friends at his PT clinic, found PAs while networking, outreaching, volunteering

**Shadowing hours:** Do not lie about your hours and keep a record. The PA community is a close-knit community.

**Thank-you notes:** Get a business card from the PAs you shadow, always write a thank-you note unless the PA says no. If a hospital supervisor/superior connected you to the PA, write a thank-you note for that person too. A supervisor can get you in touch with a lot of PAs.

### Advice for Scholarships/Loans:

- **National Health Service Corps (2 routes)**

- Scholarship: Receive (taxable) scholarship *while in school*. Work in an underserved community and you may be moved to areas anywhere in the nation after graduating.
- Loan repayment program: Help pay back your outside loans while you're working in an underserved community.
- **Airforce scholarship**: service in the airforce for 3 years
- **Loans from the bank**
- **Scholarships**: USC offers a loan for the first year only, and graduate school scholarships are rare.
- **Paying it back?** Chase is fairly confident that he can pay back the loans.

**Advice for CASPA applications:** Start early, enter all your information correctly. Always double check your input. Start your personal statement early and maybe get an advisor.

#### Questions:

1. **When you were shadowing, did you like the hospital or clinic environment more?:** Chase does not prefer one over the other, and likes both. A hospital has more resources available and is fast-paced, and a clinic has more follow-ups with patients, where PAs can form unique relationships with the patients
2. **What specialty have you decided on?:** Still deciding, his interest changes all the time. He's currently interested in Family Medicine.
3. **What's your response to the common interview question, "Why would you want to be a PA as opposed to a NP or med student?":** Got that question on both of his interviews. Said that he liked the flexibility of the profession and that school could be completed in a shorter time. The PA profession is appropriate for someone who wants to start a family, since he wants to start one with his girlfriend soon.