

Paul Capelli

As an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, I was exposed to primary texts in the social sciences and humanities while concentrating in economics and philosophy. What interested me most in each discipline was the study of human thought. I learned that economics explores human decision making processes and philosophy examines general beliefs and thoughts. What was of greatest interest to me, however, was the question of “*how*” we think.

After college I volunteered in an inpatient psychiatric ward. At first the psychopathology was devastating, but then I became intrigued with the patient’s thought processes and fascinated by the changes I observed as a result of medication and therapy. My interest in the medical profession was affirmed by the realization that the profession offered an intellectually enriching environment while simultaneously allowing me to help people face to face.

During medical school my interest in Psychiatry continued. I enjoyed the basic sciences and began my clinical rotations with an open mind. As I progressed through my clerkships I realized the most interesting patients I encountered were those with psychiatric conditions. When I finally did my Psychiatry clerkships I knew that this was the medical specialty for me. Helping reduce the mental anguish of patients was gratifying and I was eager to learn about every aspect of the pathology and treatment. I read widely, sought out information from residents and attendings, and was eager to learn more. I took senior elective clerkships in Addiction Psychiatry and Neuropsychiatry which confirmed my interest in the study of the human mind. In Psychiatry I feel I have found a discipline that will continue to interest me throughout my career.

I am looking for a residency program that will satisfy my desire to learn from knowledgeable professionals, will expose me to the important literature in the field, offer opportunities to work directly with a diverse patient population, and allow me to do clinical research.

After residency I am considering doing a fellowship in Geriatric Psychiatry or Neuropsychiatry and possibly becoming an academic. Yet, I can also envision myself in an Adult General Psychiatry practice in a public or private setting. What I know at this time is that I want to learn as much as possible about the human mind and become as effective as possible in reducing mental suffering.