

Question and Response - QuARMS Selection Process (Written Response)

Senator Smolej

Although the Queen's University Accelerated Route to Medical School, QuARMS, is an interesting case study in educational reform, its association to the Chancellor's Scholarship has raised numerous concerns related to the continued integrity of the award. As it stands, the sole process to be considered for admission into the QuARMS program has been delegated to secondary schools, where one requires the privilege of a nomination for the Chancellor's Scholarship. Anecdotal reports of increasing and unfair interference where formal nomination processes exist, and equally concerning, where they do not, have arisen.

- A. With reference to the academic diversity of Chancellor's Scholarship applicants, what percentage of the nominees applied to a BSc vs. BA program before and after consideration into QuARMS was contingent on a nomination?*
- B. Although socioeconomic status and privilege continue to affect the equity in many merit-based awards and applications, does the university believe it has a moral imperative to recognize the especially unfair process within the initial selection process for admission to Queen's Medical School here?*

Response

The Queen's University Accelerated Route to Medical School (QuARMS) offers the opportunity of direct entry to medical school after two years' undergraduate study in the Faculty of Arts and Science. In 2013, the first year applications to the program were considered, any candidate was required to be a nominee for a Chancellor's Scholarship. Before the nomination of a student for a Chancellor's Scholarship was connected with the admission process for the QuARMS program, approximately 33 percent of applicants for the scholarship applied to the BScH. In the year there was a connection, this rose to 53 percent.

Thus, although this process did eventually yield 10 superb students who are flourishing in the current QuARMS cohort, the stated concerns about the effect on the Chancellor's Scholarship program are valid. For this reason, the process has now been modified. High schools nominating students for the scholarship program no longer have to choose between a QuARMS applicant and one interested in another program at Queen's.

Instead, any high school is able to nominate one QuARMS applicant and at least one additional nomination specifically for a Chancellor's Scholarship. The larger high schools may submit additional nominations for Chancellor's Scholarships (the number of nominations for any particular school is proportional to the size of the graduating class, to a maximum of three nominations for the largest schools).

It is unclear whether the second part of the question refers to QuARMS specifically or to entry to medical school generally. If it is the former that is deemed to be "especially unfair", this issue has been addressed by the change indicated above. Additionally, QuARMS nominees are offered travel bursaries for the interview process and successful candidates are made aware of their eligibility for admission bursaries.

If the reference is to medical school generally, it is important to recognize that the 90 slots filled by students other than QuARMS nominees come from a pool of some 4400 applications. Among those offered admission, it would be unusual these days for the offer to be turned down because of financial barriers because, over the last 20 years or so, virtually all these successful applicants have access to bank loans to help fund their medical education.