



# BALDWIN BELL

CLASS OF 2022

## STUDENT PROFILE

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**Hometown: Raleigh, NC**

**Undergraduate Major: Biology with a minor in Public Health**

**Career Aspirations: General Dentist**

**Professional School: East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine**

### **What's been your favorite part of the journey to apply to professional schools?**

The journey of applying to professional school had its high and low points, but I am thankful to have experienced them all. My favorite part of the journey was most definitely the end; seeing all the hard work, long nights studying, the many essays, and hours of interview prep pay off, once I got my acceptance letter into dental school.

### **How did you prepare yourself for the process of applying to schools?**

I prepared myself by first making sure I was involved in dental organizations on campus to assist me with the matriculation process into dental school and meeting all necessary requirements before applying. After getting involved, and informed, I made sure to prioritize my course work, volunteering, and shadowing. The process of applying is a tough mental journey as well, preparing for this was not as easy but having a strong support system of friends, family, and mentors on this journey was crucial to my success.

### **Looking back, what advice would you give to students who are interested in professional schools? What do you wish you had known earlier?**

Looking back, I would advise students interested in professional school to prioritize their time and take advantage of all the tools/opportunities ECU offers to help students who intend to apply to some form of professional school. The time you spend at ECU is what you make of it, get involved, join clubs, attend events, meet new people and network; the opportunities on campus are endless, it's just about taking advantage of what is available. I would also definitely suggest utilizing the Pre-Professional Advising Committee (PPAC), the staff assisted me to become a strong well-rounded applicant with an application to match.

## **What were some of the challenges you came across when preparing to apply to schools (what was tougher than you expected)?**

One thing that challenged me on my application journey was finalizing my polished personal statement. In all, I re-drafted my personal statement 10+ times; with the help of several editors, I continuously made edits and revisions to encapsulate my story and passion for dentistry within the character limit. I would advise starting on writing your personal statement early when preparing to apply to school. As I said before, it is challenging to summarize your story, passion, and reasons why you chose to make a difference on this path in such a limited character count, so starting early will give you an advantage.

## **What services or organizations would you recommend pre-professional students utilize?**

I would suggest joining the organizations: Undergraduates Students National Dental Association (USNDA) and the Pre-Dental Honor Society (PDHS). Both USNDA and PDHS provided me with knowledge about application requirements, DAT prep, and provided me with several opportunities to volunteer, shadow, and network with fellow pre-dents and current dental students from ECU's School of Dental Medicine (SoDM). USNDA provided me with a mentor attending the ECU SoDM, opening a channel of communication between me and a current student who was able to provide advice and support along my application journey. As far as services, as said before, the PPAC provides invaluable services and opportunities to better you as an applicant.

## **What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?**

I was involved in the organizations Undergraduates Students National Dental Association (USNDA), Pre-Dental Honor Society (PDHS), and Pirate After School Scholars (PASS).

## **What type of shadowing did you do?**

I obtained 130+ hours shadowing general dentists, orthodontists, and pediatric dentists prior to applying to dental school. Most of my shadowing hours came from a local dentist office located in Greenville, Earp Dentistry, the summer of 2021. Shadowing during this time was difficult due to Covid-19 restrictions at many offices, but fortunately Dr. Earp, along with Dr. Torres, Dr. Mendez, Dr. Holly and the kind-hearted staff, allowed me to come in regularly and shadow at my leisure. I am grateful for every dental professional I have had the opportunity to shadow under; shadowing reaffirmed my passion, desire and drive to give back to my community and to those in need through my love for dentistry.

## **What type of volunteering did you do?**

Most of my volunteering hours came from the Greenville foodbank. I particularly enjoyed volunteering here because it allowed me to make an impact, first-hand, and help those in need of food and other non-perishable food items within the local community. Another volunteer opportunity I am thankful to have participated in was with the PASS organization. Through PASS, I had the opportunity to tutor kids, in elementary through middle grades, in need of extra academic attention outside of school at the Greenville public library.

**Did you do research? If so what was the topic?**

I did research for a brief period, prior to the pandemic, under chemistry professor Dr. David Rudel. In this lab, we were conducting research to analyze the effects of nickel exposure on nematode life processes and extrapolating that data to analyze the effects of nickel exposure on human life processes.

**What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?**

Being a part of the Pirate After School Scholars gave me the opportunity to educate and connect with local elementary and middle school students in order to promote their academic success. Students of various grades would meet with me at the public library, where we would read assigned chapters for comprehension and fluency, complete homework, and study together for important upcoming tests. As a club, we also donated school supplies to these students and provided snacks at most tutoring sessions. It was self-rewarding to see these students progress and have an eagerness to learn.

**Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?**

If you are passionate about applying and going to professional school, do not take no for an answer. Be persistent in chasing your goals and don't let a "no" deter your way of thinking; believe in yourself, who you are, and what you can accomplish. Dream big, pursue new opportunities, and continue to better yourself in some way, every day!