

# CALEB SMITH

CLASS OF 2018



## STUDENT PROFILE

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**Hometown: Robersonville, NC**

**Undergraduate Major: B.S. Exercise and Sports Science, Campbell University 2018; Post Baccalaureate (Pre-Dental Track) East Carolina University**

**Career Aspirations: General Dentist**

**Professional School: Howard University College of Dentistry (HUCD)**

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

My favorite part of my non-traditional journey to dental school has been the connections I have made with likeminded students that want to also bridge the gap in health disparities by specifically improving the access to dental care.

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

Challenges that I experienced while applying included preparing for the Dental Admissions Test (DAT) and balancing life with studying. I took the DAT twice to improve my scores. While studying, I continued to work, volunteer, attend webinars, and virtually diversify my shadowing experiences. Throughout this process, I have learned much about myself regarding my level of perseverance and time management.

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

I prepared myself for the process of applying to dental schools by setting goals for myself with deadlines. This was very helpful because it allowed me to track and assess my progress. I attended various events offered by dental schools, such as "Impressions Day" and Q&A webinars. This allowed me to gain insight on components of the application process such as writing a good personal statement, asking for letters of recommendation, studying for the DAT, staying motivated, and accurately completing the ADEA/AADSAS application.

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

My advice to students who are interested in professional school is to do your research ahead of time and familiarize yourself with the process. Be sure to shadow and see what the field is really like. Network as much as possible and find a good mentor that is willing to guide you in the right direction.

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

I highly recommend being a part of the Pre-Dental Honor Society, Undergraduate Student National Dental Association (USNDA), and utilizing ECU's PPAC.

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

While attending ECU I was a member of the East Carolina University Cheerleading team, Undergraduate Student National Dental Association (USNDA), and Melanin Healthcare Professionals (MHCP). While attending Campbell University I was a part of the Campbell University Cheerleading team, Gospel Choir, and the Black Student Association.

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

I shadowed two general dentists at a federally qualified health center. I have shadowed orthodontic procedures under Dr. Ross at Ross Orthodontics. I also utilized "Dental Shadowers" on YouTube to diversify my shadowing experiences and learn about different specialties such as endodontics, periodontics, and pediatric dentistry.

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

My volunteering experiences include events such as Give Kids a Smile, NC Food bank, NC Missions of Mercy (MOM) Clinics, Building Hope Center, The Future Belongs to You Foundation (TFBU), mentoring, and tutoring.

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

I did not participate in any research.

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

While volunteering at the Building Hope Community Center alongside Melanin Health Care Professionals, we spoke with underrepresented grade school children about professional careers in healthcare and the importance of oral healthcare. Opportunities to give back to my own community are important to me because they initiate conversations that are not often held in households similar to my own.

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

Ensure to take time for yourself and do what truly makes you happy. Always remember your "why".