



GEORGIA SASSER

CLASS OF 2022

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Holly Springs, NC

Undergraduate Major: BS in Rehabilitation Services and
BA in Psychology

Career Aspiration: Health Research Professor

Professional School: The Ohio State University, PhD in
Health Behavior and Health Promotion (Public Health)

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

In my pursuit of activities that would make me competitive for graduate admissions, I got involved in a lot of really interesting programs and activities!

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

Just figuring out where to apply was challenging. There are so many options out there and it was challenging to find programs that fit my academic goals, location preference, and budget.

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

I sat down for meetings with the people who wrote my letters of recommendation to talk about my goals and credentials. When I initially set up these meetings I was applying to Occupational Therapy programs because that's what I had planned on pursuing, even though I was already leaning toward a research track. My mentors both, separately, brought up that a career in research would be a much better fit for me and that I would be a strong candidate in PhD applications. Once I finally made the decision to switch in fall of my senior year (when I was already almost finished with my OT applications) I was rushing to find programs and get my materials together. These same mentors became incredible resources to help me write and edit personal statements, polish writing samples, and craft competitive applications. I am endlessly grateful for their support and am glad that I leaned on the resources I had available!

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

Pre-Occupational Therapy Student Association (President 2020-2021 year), Find Your Voice (cofounder), Phi Kappa Phi, Psi Chi, Every Nation Campus Ministry

What type of shadowing did you do?

I shadowed at Vidant in adult acute care Occupational Therapy and in pediatric outpatient therapy before deciding to change course. Honestly, shadowing in those settings (while very interesting!) was part of what helped me realize that I wasn't as interesting in direct patient treatment.

What type of volunteering did you do?

I volunteered at Vidant in a few different departments but my favorites were the PACU at the outpatient SurgiCenter and the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in mother-baby. I was a Pledge Purple Ambassador for two years and served on the planning committee that second year, and I also helped with childcare at my church.

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

I completed a signature honors project about sexual assault education, primarily using social media (@findyourvoice.ecu). I've also worked as an intern and research assistant for two years in the pediatrics department at Brody School of Medicine, where I've written (and published!) on academic projects related to pediatrics as well as worked on industry sponsored and grant funded clinical trials.

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

Pre-professional advising was one of my best resources, both in planning my classes as well as preparing for grad applications. Also forming solid relationships with at least a few faculty and staff who can give advice and support your applications for whatever comes next!

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

My experience working at Brody has been incredibly fulfilling, both intellectually and personally. Being immersed in health research solidified that I want to pursue an academic path where I can learn and develop new ways to help people. I also worked with an incredible team who has been so supportive and helpful!

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

I wish I had listened to my gut (and everyone around me) that was telling me I needed to switch plans. It's hard to change that what you've been planning and telling people for years, but the great thing about college is that it gives you that chance to learn and find new interests!

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

A criticism of your work is just another opportunity to learn, it does not mean that you have failed as a person. And don't be afraid to change your plans, it's better to pursue your real passions now than put years of your life and possibly a lot of money into a career that you know won't make you happy.